

LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS
OF THE ENGLISH LAKES



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ENGLISH LAKES

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Literary Associations of the English Lakes

By Rev.
H. D. Rawnsley
Honorary Canon of Carlisle

Volume I. Cumberland, Keswick
and Southey's Country

Glasgow
James MacLehose and Sons
Publishers to the University
1894

Dedicated

TO MY KIND FRIEND AND FELLOW-LABOURER

WILLIAM HENRY HILLS,

WHO HAS DONE MORE THAN ANY MAN IN THE DISTRICT, TO KEEP
FOR THE HEALTH, REST, AND INSPIRATION OF THE PEOPLE,
OUR ENGLISH LAKELAND, UNDISFIGURED, AND

“SAFE FROM RASH ASSAULT.”

PREFATORY NOTE

A RESIDENCE of fifteen years in the Lake District has led me to believe that for lack of some compendium of the Literary Associations of the country-side, the memories of the men and women whose life and work have added such charm to the scene of their labours are fading from off the circle of our hills.

This book has been written to preserve in their several localities, for visitors and residents alike, the names, the individualities, the presence of the minds and hearts, that have here gathered inspiration and shed lustre upon their homes.

My thanks are due to Ernest Coleridge, to Mrs. Sandford, author of *Thomas Poole and his Friends*; to the late Mrs. Joshua Stanger, to the late Mrs. David Leitch, to Miss Moorsom, to Professor W. Knight, to Miss Mary Carr, to Mrs. Hannah M. Wigham, to Miss F. Arnold, to

Messrs. George Watson, Fisher Crosthwaite, John Reid, William Fletcher, for permission to use original matter, or for information which they kindly gave me during the writing of this book. Particularly do I desire to thank the friend who helped me with her kind suggestions during the passing of the book through the press, for her care in verifying references and in the making of the index.

H. D. R.

CROSTHWAITE VICARAGE,

May 1, 1894.

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VOL. I

CUMBERLAND, KESWICK, AND
SOUTHEY'S COUNTRY

LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF THE ENGLISH LAKES

CHAPTER I

THE GATEWAYS OF THE LAKE DISTRICT

THE traveller to the Lake District, if he will let the imagination have its way, can never be unsolaced and alone. He is in company not only with mountains, but with men.

For the wanderer from vale to vale there is added to what Matthew Arnold called "the cheerful silence of the fells," the great cheer of silent fellowship with those whose spirits still move and have their being in realms of thought and living effort, and whose footsteps are still found on cloudy upland or in sunny dale.

There is perhaps in the world no bit of mountain ground twenty miles in diameter, so crowded with lofty memories of men, who lived and loved and helped their own times, and added for all time to the world's store of thought

and music, as this little bit of the three northern English counties, that meet at the Shire stones on Wraynose Pass. There is hardly a valley or a hill down which, or on which, one does not meet great ghostly presences.

And fortunately for us, these for the most part have had such faithful chronicling, as to be recognisable even to the cut of their woodland dress, their gait, their glance, the very sound of their voice, when in our fancy we see them approaching.

There, for example, gaunt and awkwardly made, with face so solemn, when wrapped in thought, that country folks said, "It was a feace wi'owt a bit of plesser in it"; in blue-black cape, a Jem Crow cap or "bit of an owd boxer hat," frilled shirt and cut away tail coat; umbrella under his arm, perhaps a green shade over his eyes, comes Wordsworth to the post at Ambleside. Here, with shirt loose at the throat, and in white ducks and hatless, stands 'Christopher North' by the rudder of the Windermere Ferry Boat, and when he leaps to land the earth seems to shake beneath him. Here, brown-eyed De Quincey starts and trembles, and talks to himself and hurries on. That little, shuffling-gaited person, "untimely old, irreverently grey," who shoulders his stick as if it was a gun, then stops dead, then runs, then pauses again, is Hartley Coleridge—'Lile Hartley,' as they call him hereabout. There again, with 'nebbed' cap on head and wooden clogs on feet, book in hand, the tall, slenderly-built, dark-eyed man, who, if you pass him takes little notice, then pauses, looks up with a queer puzzled face, as if he were short-sighted and wanted to look over his spectacles at something

or somebody in the sky, and then returns the salutation with abstracted air, is Robert Southey.

And here, in this old market cart with bracken in the bottom for cushion, slow-winding down the vale are Mrs. Wordsworth and Dorothy; Dorothy, the wild-eyed, Dorothy, with a face as brown and tanned as a gipsy's, going to meet the walkers of their party at Dungeon Ghyll. A man with grey eyes Dorothy meets there; broadly-built, and a little above middle height, pallid in complexion, and rather heavy of face, but of brow magnificent; he and Dorothy are soon rapt in deepest talk. This is the "dear, dear Coleridge" of Dorothy's Journal.

But there are less easily recognisable forms from further days of old, that meet one in our journey towards the Lake District, whether we come from Lancaster across the sands, or take train straight to Windermere.

If we choose the latter course we see the little form of Catherine Parr—one day to be queenly Kate who dared to argue with bluff King Hal—walking in the castle meadow of Kendal, composing, perhaps, as she walks one or other of her simple prayers; or we may imagine young Romney between 1756 and '62, working away at his first portraits in the house of his master, Steele, down in the grey town of the Dale of the Kent.¹ Away to the north-east Kentmere vale opens, and Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, quaint Gilpin in grey hosen and brown

¹ John Dalton, the chemist, and author of *Meteorological Essays*, worked here in his cousin George Bewley's school, first as usher, afterwards as joint-proprietor with his brother Jonathan, between the years 1781 and 1793.

coat, maker of many sermons, publisher but of one, yet by his life preacher always of three—good faith, true courage, and sweet sincerity—comes riding down on mission-journey bent.

Kentmere is haunted by other literary reminiscences now, for the talented grand-daughter of Dr. Arnold has woven Kentmere scenery and Kentmere ways into her ‘Robert Elsmere.’ But it is of Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, that one thinks first as one sights the valley that gave us strong men and true, with good yew-bows and coats of milk-white cloth, or Kendal-green, in the days of Flodden Field, and that bred so brave a village pastor as was born at Kentmere Hall in the year 1517.

Courage had had a long ancestry in that Gilpin family, for one reads in old Sir Daniel Le Fleming’s description of Westmoreland how that Richard Gilpin in the time of King John was “enfeoffed in the Barone of Kendale, and he slew a wild boar that raged in the mountains adjoining, whence it was that the Gilpins have a boar for their coat.”

It is not every village clergyman that refuses a bishopric when it comes his way. This did Bernard Gilpin. His enemies would have him hauled to the stake at Durham for having adopted the principles of the Reformation. As they could not do it by force, they would try wile. They drew up thirty articles against him and laid them before Bishop Bonner. “The heretic,” said Bonner, “shall be burnt in less than a fortnight.”

Gilpin heard of this plot, and with utmost composure prepared to suffer for the truths he had espoused, nay,

rejoiced that he might seal his testimony of faith with his life. He called his almoner, William Airy, to his side. "At length," said he, laying his hand upon his steward's shoulder, "they have prevailed against me, I am accused to the Bishop of London from whom is no escaping; God forgive their malice and give me strength to undergo the trial." So he patiently suffered arrest and rode away to London. On the journey his horse fell, and he broke his leg. His enemies taunted him; for one of Gilpin's sayings was, "that nothing happened us, but what was for our good." "Is this thy broken leg then, for thy good?" said they. "I make no question but it is," replied he, and Gilpin was right; for Queen Mary died before he could go forward on his way to London, and thus the Apostle of the North regained his liberty.

As the traveller to the English Lakes, by the branch line from Oxenholme to Windermere, passes the mouth of Kentmere vale, let him remember Edward Irving's testimony to Bernard Gilpin's worth. "He is a model soul, he, of the student, of the preacher, of the pastor, and of the wise and worthy member of society." Let him call to mind the words of the late Bishop Lightfoot, who, preaching to the people of Houghton le Spring on the Tercentenary Commemoration of their one-time pastor, spoke of Bernard Gilpin as "the noblest representative" and in his teaching "the noblest exponent of the Reformation"; "prototype of the English parish clergyman, he anticipated, too, by three centuries, the supplemental work, which in our own age for the first time the clergy have grafted upon their parochial ministrations." A man

who led the way in matters of education, whose character was finely balanced from first to last; who added to unworldliness courage, and to courage tenderness and love, and to tenderness, cheerfulness of soul; who saw his way through all the paths of life by the lamp of his conscience, which he kept well trimmed. In all things he kept by the model of Christ. Like his Master, he was a sharp sword against the scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; a place of refuge to the naked and destitute, a shepherd to the flock, food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty.¹ And let him think of that power to impress great souls with truth and worthiness, which seems from of old to have found our valleys fair for its feet, and on our mountain heights to have felt its angel wings.

If, on the other hand, one 'crosses the sands,' and leaving the main line at Carnforth, goes by Ulverston, and so to Coniston or to Lakeside and enters the Lake District as it ought to be entered, through the portal of the hills or over the shining water-flood, one cannot help being reminded that while Turner painted here, there amongst the mosses and coppice land the painter Romney, the son of the Dalton cabinet-maker, grew to fame.

Again, as we look out to Swarthmoor Hall, beyond Ulverston, we remember one who put all art from him for love of God and his fellows. In that ancient hall George Fox found refuge, and a helpmeet for life, in 1669.

Nor must we forget when at the gates of Lakeland, that Furness Abbey—in the vale of Deadly Nightshade—kept alive the lamp of literature through dark times.

¹ Cf. *Leaders in the Northern Church*, Bishop Lightfoot, p. 131 *et seq.*

There, in the year 1180, lived and wrote Jocelyn the Monk, the biographer of good St. Kentigern, or St. Mungo, as the Scotch call him—the first great bishop of our diocese, he who set up the Cross in the Thwaite near Keswick, in 553.

If, however, the traveller will not enter the English Lake District from the south, but prefers to come from north and west, or north and east, he will find himself again in goodly company.

Say he comes by some coast packet, and lands at Whitehaven. Here, in fancy, he may meet upon the quay young Shelley with his child-wife Harriet and his sister-in-law, Eliza Westbrook, in excellent spirits, waiting in what he called that “miserable manufacturing seaport town” for the winds to fill the sails of “the packet” to bear him and his poems (in MSS.) and his “Address to the Irish People” away at midnight to Dublin, *via* the Isle of Man; or we may find him in the inn penning his letter under date Feb. 3, 1812, to Miss Hutchinson, in which he details his leaving Keswick, and expresses his satisfaction at the prospect of escape from the “filthy town and horrible inn”¹ where he then was writing.

Or again, we may find the Seer of Craigenputtock pacing the decks of a cargo-boat bound from Glencaple to Liverpool with a certain Esbie he has found in the steerage, deep in talk of mysticism, during the “six weary hours” he is forced to stay at Whitehaven; and we may compassionate Carlyle whose journal entry runs thus:—“Re-embarkment there amidst bellowing

¹ MacCarthy's *Early Life of Shelley*, p. 136.

and tumult and fiddling unutterable, all like a spectral vision.”¹

But we would fain look back to days when this Whitehaven was less begrimed by the fruit of its coal measure, and might still claim some title to its name. The gentle Spenser, who, some aver, won his wife in Cumberland, may be in fancy with us; Spenser, bound hither not so much I think to woo or marry the grey-eyed maiden of St. Bees, as to ship himself in the train of his friend Lord Grey de Wilton, the Irish Secretary of State, for work in that most distressful country over sea. But if we cannot conjure the shade of Spenser into being on the quayside, at least here we may surely catch a glimpse of the gentle “Algrind,” Spenser’s friend, Archbishop Grindal, whom Lord Bacon called “the gravest and greatest prelate of the land.” He was born at St. Bees in 1519; and the grammar school he founded and endowed with lands of the ancient priory still flourishes in the hollow by the shore that gave refuge to St. Bega, the first Abbess of St. Bees.

If, interested in the literature of our Saxon and Norse forefathers, we go to St. Bees, we may see the door-impost, which with its quaint carving serves as illustration to that part of Beowulf’s poem that tells of the dragon that guards the mound of sacred treasures. Or again, if we venture a little inland from Whitehaven, we may see written clear upon the Gosforth cross a Christianised version of the Saga of the Voluspa which was carved thereon, so Dr. Stephens of Copenhagen thinks, not later than the end of the seventh century.

¹Froude’s *Carlyle. First Forty Years*, Vol. II., p. 163.

But the traveller who cares for Christian missal and mediæval letters and art, will, as he takes train from Whitehaven to Keswick, look out at the boulder-strewn shore of Harrington, and remember that St. Aedfrith's wondrously illuminated copy of the Gospels which was wrought for Cuthbert the Saint, was rescued from the sea by the bearers of St. Cuthbert's body, at low tide here; and if at the British Museum he ask for sight of it, he may see, still sticking to its vellum pages, the salt that our Solway gave it on that eventful day so many hundred years ago.

We have had our great Christian teachers of later date than Cuthbert from this part of Cumberland. For besides Grindal, the great and good, I am not sure but that St. Bees may not also boast that it nurtured Edwin Sandys, that writer for the Reformation, who, born at Hawkshead Hall in 1519, became Prebend of Carlisle, 1552, and had to flee the country for that in 1553 he dared to preach in favour of Lady Jane Grey's pretensions to the crown. He came from exile the day the crown was set on the head of Queen Elizabeth, and died Archbishop of York, in 1588. As Cumbrians, chiefly do we thank him for founding the little school of Hawkshead, in 1585, which near two hundred years later taught, amongst its scholars, Wordsworth and his three brothers, and trained the heart and eye by which we who are readers of Wordsworth's poetry feel and see to-day.

Still bound for Keswick and the heart of the Lakeland hills, let the traveller, as he passes Workington or 'Derwent's Muth' as it was called, remember how St.

Cuthbert's body, borne by the monks from Lorton Vale, once came thither, or let him feel the "shuddering presage" of "that ensanguined block of Fotheringay" which a fair Queen may once have felt, as her "boat there touched the strand." On towards the Lakeland hills we speed, and as the train runs into the Cockermouth station, thoughts of our greatest Cumbrian poet banish other memories. Here was born William Wordsworth, April 17, in the year 1770.

All the way from Workington that river which, as Wordsworth wrote, was used

"To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams,"¹

has been with us.

The "tempting playmate" whom he and his sister Dorothy so dearly loved, is by reason of the march of manufacture and the mining industry, less tempting to day, but still by its sandy banks in the September sun the ragwort shines and the boy bathers play. And whether we listen to the voice of the river away up in Borrowdale, "murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves," or nearer to the town leaping through the flowery groves of Isel, it is full charged of Wordsworth's music.

There is yet one other gateway to the Lake District, and he who journeys from Penrith to Pooley Bridge can

¹ *Prelude*, Book I., p. 238. The quotations from Wordsworth, unless specially noted, are taken from the single volume edition of his works. Macmillan & Co. 1888.

never forget that at Penrith the worthy mercer, William Cookson dwelt, whose only daughter, Ann, became the mother of our great Cumberland bard; that it was at Penrith Wordsworth got his earliest schooling, and had for fellow-scholar his future wife, Mary Hutchinson. He will remember also, that to Brougham Hall beyond Mayborough Mound and the Tournay field close by—with their memories of primeval parliaments and old-time trials of strength—often came a gladiator of later parliamentary times, the eccentric statesman, orator, and writer, Lord Brougham.

Journeying on by coach from Penrith towards Ullswater, one sees the grotto at Yanwath, the farm-house home of the bard of Eamont Vale, Wordsworth's friend, the garden-loving Wilkinson. Further on we pass Eusemere, so well-known by Dorothy Wordsworth, visited by De Quincey, and often sojourned at by Wordsworth. There, between the years 1795 and 1806, lived Thomas Clarkson, the distinguished advocate and historian of the Abolition of Slavery, the author too of the *Portraiture of Quakerism*, and the writer of the *Memoirs of William Penn*.

These are some of the literary associations with the minds of other days, that meet us as we enter the portals of the English Lakes. Let us pass within the mountain sanctuary, and speak with other presences and summon other spirits from the past, there, in their native haunts, beloved of old.

CHAPTER II

GRETA HALL

COLERIDGE, WORDSWORTH, AND CALVERT : COLERIDGE AT GRETA
HALL : CHARLES LAMB'S VISIT TO THE LAKES

IT was in June 1800, so far as one can gleam from Dorothy Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal, that S. T. Coleridge and his wife and little Hartley first came up into the Lake District, to stay at Dove Cottage with the Wordsworths, just back from Germany, and thence to go on to Windy Brow at Keswick.

Here is an extract from that journal:—"Wednesday (June 22, 1800). On Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Coleridge and Hartley came. The day was very warm. We sailed to the foot of Loughrigg. They staid with us three weeks, and till the Thursday following, from 1st till 23rd of July. On the Friday preceding their departure we drank tea at the island. . . . I accompanied Mrs. C. to Wytheburn."¹ During this time Coleridge must have

¹ *Life of William Wordsworth*, by William Knight, LL.D., Vol. I., p. 266.

gone backward and forward to Keswick, for in a letter to his friend Poole, dated July 4, 1800, he describes his arrival at Keswick, and the commencement of his residence at Greta Hall. Poor man he is far from well. A cold caught on his journey to the North has prostrated him; he is so weak "that writing is hateful to him." Judged by his letters he seems to have been a chronic invalid during his residence at Greta Hall.

In the same journal under date Friday morning, August 8, Dorothy writes—"Walked over the mountains by Watendlath. A most enchanting walk. Watendlath a heavenly scene. Reached Coleridge's at eleven o'clock.

"Saturday morning. I walked with Coleridge in the Windy Brow woods.

"Monday. Walked to Windy Brow.

"Wednesday. Made the Windy Brow seat."¹

Whether the Calverts were the entertainers of the Coleridges on this occasion, or had lent them their house, I know not. Coleridge certainly appears to have been gradually finding that Keswick was a desirable resting-place, and we know Calvert of Windy Brow offered to place part of the house at his disposal, if only he and Wordsworth would join forces with him and go in for scientific research and chemistry. I expect Dr. Brownrigg's work at Ormathwaite had vastly interested him. At any rate Calvert, steward for the Duke of Norfolk, was a man of rare qualities; appreciative of Wordsworth's wisdom and poetry; of Coleridge's eloquence and philosophy; and

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., pp. 267, 268.

determined, if it might be, to have both poets for neighbours.

Coleridge saw the Keswick valley; and the beauty of the place added to a proximity to Calvert, to Sir Gilfrid Lawson's library, to William Wordsworth, and to Dorothy, laid strong hold upon his mind, and bade him leave London and set up house in Cumberland. He took up his quarters at Greta Hall in the autumn of 1800. Therefrom he writes a letter to Humphrey Davy, dated Feb. 7, 1801, and asks for information as to text books and laboratory equipment, in which he describes Calvert of Windy Brow thus:—

“A gentleman resident here, his name Calvert, an idle, good-hearted, and ingenious man, has a great desire to commence fellow-student with me and Wordsworth in Chemistry. He is an intimate friend of Wordsworth's, and he has proposed to W. to take a house which he (Calvert) has nearly built, called Windy Brow, in a delicious situation, scarce half a mile from Greta Hall, the residence of S. T. Coleridge, Esq., and so for him (Calvert) to live with them, *i.e.*, Wordsworth and his sister. In this case he means to build a little laboratory, etc Wordsworth has not quite decided, but is strongly inclined to adopt the scheme, because he and his sister have before lived with Calvert on the same footing” (I suppose this refers to their stay at Windy Brow in 1792) “and are much attached to him; because my health is so precarious and so much injured by wet, and his health, too, is like little potatoes, no great things; and therefore Grasmere (13 miles from Keswick) is too great a distance for us to

enjoy each other's society without inconvenience, as much as it would be profitable for us both ; and likewise because he feels it more necessary for him to have some intellectual pursuit less clearly connected with deep passion than poetry. . . . However, whether Wordsworth come or no, Calvert and I have determined to begin and go on. Calvert is a man of sense and some originality, and is, besides, what is well called a handy man. He is a good practical mechanic."¹

If there had been any doubt as to the exact date when they came to Keswick and went into residence at Greta Hall—for Sara Coleridge only tells us briefly that it was in 1800, and Derwent Coleridge that it was in the autumn of the year 1800—it is removed by a letter to Josiah Wedgwood, under date July 24, 1800, in which Coleridge, evidently writing from Greta Hall, says, "This is the first day of my arrival at Keswick," and then proceeds to describe the roomy house on an eminence, a furlong from the town, with its enormous garden sub-let in part for market produce, as it is at this day, and the delightful shady walk by the river Greta, now hardly traceable. Nor is there any doubt as to what the mother and children looked like. Of the former, Mr. Reynell, who saw the Coleridges at Stowey, wrote: "I found Mrs. Coleridge as I have continued to find her, sensible, affable, and good-natured, thrifty and industrious, and always neat and prettily dressed. . . . Mrs. Coleridge is indeed a pretty woman."²

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 230.

² *Life of Coleridge*: J. Dykes Campbell, p. 74.

Of little Derwent, who was born at Greta Hall on Sept. 14, 1800, Dorothy Wordsworth tells us in Dec. 1801, "Derwent in the cradle asleep . . . the image of his father."¹ And writing of his little Hartley to Sir H. Davy on July 25, 1800, Coleridge says, "Hartley is a spirit that dances on an aspen leaf; the air that yonder sallow-faced and yawning tourist is breathing is to my babe a perpetual nitrous oxide. Never was more joyous creature born. Pain with him is so wholly transubstantiated by the joys that had rolled on before, and rushed on after, that oftentimes five minutes after his mother has whipt him he has gone up and asked her to whip him again."²

How different a picture this of the child "whose fancies from afar are brought," from that of the man, "untimely old, irreverently grey," whom Wordsworth foresaw in the six years old child, with "Pain" for "guest, Lord of thy house and hospitality."³

But how came Coleridge to be at Greta Hall in residence? His friendship with Calvert and Wordsworth had helped him to Cumberland, and the happy opportunity of finding a house just ready for his wishing had decided the matter of his stay in the Keswick Vale.

Let us imagine it is June of 1800. If we had been down at High Hill, somewhere near Bromley's House, we should have seen a team of smoking horses just come in from

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 282.

² *Fragmentary Remains of Sir Humphrey Davy*. Ed. by his brother. 1858.

³ *To H. C. Six Years Old*, p. 184.

Whitehaven, and having a bait at the stables there. On the waggon with its hood would have been the words, "William Jackson, Carrier, Whitehaven to Kendal and Lancaster."

The owner is not with them ; he is still building, away at Greta Hall, a kind of double mansion. In part of this, the most northerly part, he is already living ; and part of it is being plastered and partitioned off from the rest of the house, to receive, at the end of the month, a friend of Mr. Calvert's and Mr. Wordsworth's, a philosopher and poet. The waggon may go on its way, and if we should never see it again it will not be forgotten, for Wordsworth, 'him-o'-Rydal,' knows that stately waggon well, and ere it cease to ply, will give it immortality of verse. The poet

"Through all the changes of the year,
Had seen 'it' through the mountains go,
In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
Majestically huge and slow."¹

And though a time came when the driver, for his peccadillo at the Cherry Tree, poor Benjamin,

"The patient, and the tender-hearted
Was from his team and waggon parted";²

and, as Wordsworth says,

"Two losses had we to sustain,
We lost both Waggoner and Wain!"³

that was not till near 1805, and this is only 1800.

Old Jackson, a veritable gentleman of the yeoman school, is, however, thinking of retiring from the business ;

¹ *The Waggoner*, Canto fourth, p. 233.

² *Idem.*

³ *Idem.*

has built 'Greata Hall,' as he used to spell it, with the proceeds of the 'stately wain'; and has determined to seek the *otium cum dignitate* that an income of £200 a year may give, and spend the last years of his life in study of his Bible, and his Shakespeare, and his Hume, and in the enjoyment of a not inconsiderable library of books which he has accumulated.

I called him a gentleman of the old type of Cumberland yeoman school. I expect his pedigree went back to crusading times at least, for, as one stands by his tombstone—which lies eighteen paces to the north in line with the third buttress on the north aisle of the Crosthwaite Church, counting from the east end—one can see his coat of arms graven on the stone; a greyhound above, and below three crescents and stars, with the motto, "Semper paratus," beneath. Below is the simple inscription: "In Memory of William Jackson of Greta Hall, Keswick, who died September 16, 1807, aged 51 years."

To this master of Benjamin and the 'girt waggon' has Wordsworth probably written, and told him that a friend of his and his sister Dorothy, with whom they have been travelling in Germany, a man of great learning and a poet, is anxious to settle down for study in the Keswick Vale. Jackson, with his love of 'beuk larning' is pleased to have him for his tenant or part-tenant. Wordsworth or Calvert has probably told Jackson that their friend Coleridge is not a rich man except in brain; and Jackson has had another offer at double the amount Coleridge can afford to pay for accommodation. But brains win the day with Jackson, and Coleridge finds in the builder of the dipartite house a

neighbourly friend as well as a landlord ; a man so well pleased with the intellectual companionship of his tenant that, when the first half-year's rent is due, he will just say, "No, no, Mr. Coleridge, I love your children, and I like your friendship ; the house is only part finished in the plastering, I shall take no rent from you, sir, this time at all."

This is how Coleridge writes of Jackson to Robert Southey, in April of 1801 :

"Our neighbour is a truly good and affectionate man, a father to my children, and a friend to me. He was offered fifty guineas for the house in which we are to live, but he preferred me for a tenant at twenty-five, and yet the whole of his income does not exceed, I believe, £200 a year. A more truly disinterested man I never met with ; severely frugal, yet almost carelessly generous ; and yet he got all his money as a common carrier, by hard labour, and by pennies and pennies. He is one instance, among many in this country, of the salutary effect of the love of knowledge—he was from a boy a lover of learning."¹

So in the early summer of 1800, hither from London Coleridge came, where he had been busy translating Schiller's *Wallenstein*, and had agreed to be co-contributor with his friends, Wordsworth, Southey, and Lamb, to the columns of the *Morning Post*. Hither he came with his wife—Southey's sister-in-law—and his child Hartley.

Coleridge was then in his prime—in his twenty-ninth year—"Hungry for Eternity," as it has been said ; feeling

¹ *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, by C. C. Southey, Vol. II., p. 148.

that all nature was but a symbol and a voice of something far more deeply interfused, a spirit in man that would commune with his Maker.

Dreams of 'pantisocracy' and 'Susquehanna,' despite its poetically sounding syllables, had passed away. The 'Hartleyan' philosophy, which had once so attracted him, was a thing of the past. The young runaway recruit, the 'Comberbach' who, at the bidding of the advertisement in Chancery Lane, "Wanted, a few smart lads for the 15th Elliot's Light Dragoons," had joined the army in 1793; and had bravely answered the question of the Inspecting General at Reading:

"'Do you think,' said the General, 'you can run a Frenchman through the body?'"

"'I do not know,' replied Coleridge, 'as I never tried, but I'll let a Frenchman run me through the body before I'll run away.'" ¹ He has long ago forgotten the pain in the stomach that prevented him cleaning his horse's heels and his own accoutrements, and the feeble attempts he made—worst of the awkward squad—to manage his hot and fiery steed at drill. The round-faced Unitarian minister, with ill-fitting short shooting jacket, who appeared suddenly upon the scene and filled Mr. Rowe's pulpit at Shrewsbury, in 1793, ay, and his chapel too; and for three weeks "fluttered the proud Salopians like an eagle in a dovecot," ² will never preach in a Unitarian pulpit again. He has been to Germany, he has reconsidered his principles, and the outcome of it all is much what he expressed to Mrs.

¹ Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, Vol. I., p. 59.

² *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 109.

Barbauld, who tackled him at a drawing-room party with the question, "So, Mr. Coleridge, I understand you do not consider Unitarians Christians?" "I hope, Madam," said he, "that all persons born in a Christian country are Christians, and trust they are under the condition of being saved; but I *do* contend that Unitarianism is not *Christianity*."¹ Almost with shame does he now speak of the time when leaving Jesus College to set on foot the publication he called the *Watchman*, in 1796, with a fervour as great almost as had possessed Fox of the leathern apron, clad in blue coat and white waistcoat, that so "not a rag of the woman of Babylon might be seen upon him," he had set out from Bristol to Sheffield, by way of Birmingham and Manchester, a volunteer lecturer, with a flaring prospectus that "knowledge is power," to set forth the Truth, political and social and religious, that the Truth might make England free.

But to-day in Keswick the Coleridge of those past days is Coleridge still. He has the fire of a soldier, the fervour of a preacher, and a singleness of heart that holds that 'name, wealth, and fame, seem cheap to him beside the interests of what he believes to be the truth and will of his Maker.'

"Fame is the fiat of the good and wise."² "By fame," he explains himself to "mean anything rather than reputation, the desire of working in the good and great permanently, through indefinite ages, the struggle to be promoted into the rank of God's fellow-labourers."³

¹ Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*, Vol. I., p. 164.

² *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 175 n.

³ *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 175.

"I expect," he said, "neither profit nor general fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own exceeding great reward. It has soothed my affections; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me."¹

And here at Greta Hall will he work out his own salvation? Not without regret has he left the Quantock Hills and that happy home at Nether Stowey, which gave him permanent shelter beside a true friend, his good friend Thomas Poole. Tennyson speaks of "the poplars four, that stand beside my father's door,"² Coleridge wrote in 1798:

"And now beloved Stowey! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lovely cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace."³

He came hither to this green and silent hill beside the Greta, but oft in thought must he have travelled southward who wrote, "I parted from Poole with pain and dejection for him, and for myself in him"⁴ and who sang

¹ Preface to Pickering's Edition of *Coleridge's Poems*. 1848.

² *Ode to Memory*, Stanza IV.

³ *Fears in Solitude*. Sibylline Leaves.

⁴ See *Life of Coleridge*: J. Dykes Campbell, p. 113.

“With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell !
And grateful, that by nature’s quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.”¹

But Coleridge’s chief delight in thinking of Nether Stowey must have been that when there he became acquainted with Wordsworth, who then resided at Alfoxden hard by, “whose society,” he tells us, “I found an invaluable blessing, and to whom I looked up with equal reverence as a poet, a philosopher, or a man.”²

To be again within reach of this Wordsworth with whom in his *annus mirabilis* of production, 1797, he had planned the “Lyrical Ballads,” and had written “The Remorse,” “The Ancient Mariner,” “Dark Ladie,” and “Christabel,” was some compensation for the change of residence. And though he has been far from well in the past year, 1800, he has written the second part of “Christabel.” This is sign and seal of returning health.

The poem returned to him, when he was feeling up to the mark, “with all the loveliness of a vision,” and he came to Keswick in 1800, “with his poetic powers no longer in a state of suspended animation,” determined if strength was his, to dedicate his power to his verse and to the glory and honour of God and the help of his fellow-men. The exceeding beauty of the scene from Greta Hall had much to do with this reawakening. What

¹ *Fears in Solitude*. Sibylline Leaves.

² Gillman’s *Life of Coleridge*, Vol. I., p. 102.

Coleridge prophesied as to the powers divine that would come upon him, when in his letter to Godwin he wrote, "I return to Cumberland and settle at Keswick, in a house of such prospect that if, according to you and Hume, impressions and ideas constitute our being, I shall have a tendency to become a god,"¹ had come to pass. How pleased the poet was with his choice of habitation, we gather from a letter to his friend Poole, under date Aug. 14, 1800, in which he says, "Our house is a delightful residence, something less than half a mile from the lake of Keswick, and something more than a furlong from the town. It commands both that lake, and the lake of Bassenthwaite. Skiddaw is behind us to the left, to the right and in front mountains of all shapes and sizes, the waterfall of Lodore is distinctly visible. In garden, etc., we are uncommonly well off, and our landlord who resides next door in this twofold house is already much attached to us. He is a quiet sensible man with as large a library as yours and perhaps larger, well stored with encyclopædias, dictionaries, and histories, etc., all modern."²

Of Coleridge's awakening muse and the retuning of his harp, the second part of *Christabel* is witness. Bitterly as he felt at times his removal from Stowey and separation from his dear friend Thomas Poole, "in the great windy parlour where he used to feel so much at home," he found, as he told Poole in a letter written Nov. 1, 1800, that everything he promised himself in this country had answered far beyond his expectations. "The

¹ See *Life of Coleridge*: J. Dykes Campbell, p. 112.

² Cf. *Thomas Poole and his friends*, by Mrs. H. Sandford.

room," says he, "in which I write commands six distinct landscapes—the two lakes, the vale, the river, and mountains and mists, and clouds and sunshine make endless combinations, as if heaven and earth were for ever talking to each other. Often when in a deep study I have walked to the window and remained there looking without seeing; all at once the lake of Keswick and the fantastic mountains . . . at the head of it, have entered into my mind, with a suddenness as if I had been snatched from Cheapside and placed for the first time in the spot where I stood, and that is a delightful feeling—these fits and trances of novelty received from a long known object."

What he was like when he came to the lakes we know from Dorothy Wordsworth's careful description.¹

We get a good account of his appearance in the winter of 1798, from William Hazlitt, with whose forehead, so Coleridge afterwards said, he had then conversed uninterruptedly for two hours, and with whom, as a good historian, the poet was well pleased.

"His complexion," says Hazlitt, "was at that time clear and even bright. His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows,"—these Hartley inherited—"and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened lustre. 'A certain tender bloom his face o'erspread,' a purple tinge as we see it in the pale thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait painters, Murillo and Velasquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 112.

chin good-humoured and round, but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing. . . . Coleridge," he continues, "in his person was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent. . . . His hair," during the latter part of his life perfectly white, "was then black and glossy as the raven's, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead,"¹—this long liberal hair is peculiar to altruists.

De Quincey, who saw S. T. Coleridge for the first time in the August of 1807 at Bridgewater, thus pictures him:—"In height he might seem to be about five feet eight (he was in reality about an inch and a half taller, but his figure was of an order which drowns the height); his person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence; his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with black hair; his eyes were large, and soft in their expression; and it was from the peculiar appearance of haze or dreaminess which mixed with their light that I recognised my object. This was Coleridge. I examined him steadfastly for a minute or more, and it struck me that he saw neither myself nor any other object in the street. He was in a deep reverie. . . . The sound of my voice, announcing my name, first awoke him; he started, and for a moment seemed at a loss to understand my purpose or his own situation; for he repeated rapidly a number of words which had no relation to either of us.

¹ *Life of Coleridge*, J. Dykes Campbell, p. 81; from *The Liberal* No. III., 1823.

There was no *mauvaise honte* in his manner, but simple perplexity, and an apparent difficulty in recovering his position amongst daylight realities. This little scene over, he received me with a kindness of manner so marked that it might be called gracious. . . . Coleridge led me to a drawing-room, rung the bell for refreshments, and omitted no part of a courteous reception," . . . and then "like some great river, the Orellana, or the St. Lawrence, that, having been checked and fretted by rocks or thwarting islands, suddenly recovers its volume of waters and its mighty music, swept at once, as if returning to his natural business, into a continuous strain of eloquent dissertation, certainly the most novel, the most finely illustrated, and traversing the most spacious fields of thought, by transitions the most just and logical, that it was possible to conceive. . . . For about three hours he had continued to talk. . . . In the midst of our conversation, if that can be called conversation which I so seldom sought to interrupt, and which did not often leave openings for contribution, the door opened and a lady entered. She was in person full, and rather below the common height, whilst her face showed to my eye some prettiness of rather a commonplace order. Coleridge paused upon her entrance; his features, however, announced no particular complacency, and did not relax into a smile. In a frigid tone, he said, whilst turning to me, 'Mrs. Coleridge,' in some slight way he then presented me to her. I bowed, and the lady almost immediately retired. From this short but uncongenial scene," adds De Quincey, "I gathered, what I afterward learned redundantly,

that Coleridge's marriage had not been a very happy one."¹

De Quincey may have been right, but who was to blame? Was it the constantly unselfish, if unintellectual and rather over-domestic gentle woman, who for all her fussiness kept a household together for years in the hope that her queer-natured spouse would return to his bairns and superintend their education? or was it the fault of the man of over-strung nerves and constant invalidism, of whom Southey once said, "the moment anything assumed the shape of a duty Coleridge felt incapable of discharging it," who unhappily sought refuge in opium for ills that it only added to? We cannot pronounce judgment; it is enough for us to know that life was not all roses for the pair who took up residence in the beginning of this century at Greta Hall. The wife was too delicate in health to go far from home, and the country people saw little of her, but the husband might have been seen any week walking in the direction of the Poet's Tryst at Thirlmere, or strolling up to Windy Brow.

Other guests of literary fame might have been noted coming down the steep garden walk, and passing towards the lake or towards the hills in company with the poet. Samuel Rogers was guest in the early days of Greta Hall hospitality.

One, too, whose name is indissolubly linked with the poem, *The Waggoner*, to whom indeed it was dedicated,² that most "good man of most dear memory,"—

¹ *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets* : De Quincey, chap. ii.

² "My dear Wordsworth,—You cannot imagine how proud we are

for he was, as Wordsworth wrote, "good if e'er a good man lived,"—Charles Lamb, he, too, was visitor at Greta Hall.

One would not go into detail as to this visit of Charles Lamb to Greta Hall, were it not for the fact that it proved the power of our mighty Skiddaw, to break down the determination of the city-bred and town-loving Lamb, to refuse to the solitudes of our Cumberland hills and dales their sovereign authority over the heart of man, their rightful power to chasten and subdue.

It is not a little interesting to see how often Lamb had rejected the proffered invitation to make the acquaintance of our hills, and how a climb up Skiddaw was at last accomplished with the result that its natural sovereignty over the soul was admitted, and that Lamb went away haunted by the horned hill which

"shrouds

His double front among the Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly."¹

How came it about that Lamb should come to Greta

here of the dedication," wrote Charles Lamb in 1819. "We read it twice for once that we do the poem. . . . 'Benjamin' is no common favourite, there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it; it is as good as it was in 1806. . . . Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication," and he playfully suggests that if Wordsworth had substituted his own name, Charles Lamb for Benjamin, and the Honourable United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, Mr. Jackson, "it might seem, by no far-fetched analogy, to point its dim warnings hitherward."—*Lamb's Letters*, edited by T. N. Talfourd, Vol. I., p. 23.

¹ *Wordsworth's Poems*, "Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side," p. 156.

Hall? The old school days at Christ's Hospital which Lamb remembered with such pleasure to his dying day, as is evidenced by that verse

"I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces,"

had been made chiefly joyous to him by his friendship with an older student, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. One remembers the letter from Charles Lamb descriptive of his love of that friend Coleridge in those memorable school days.¹

In those old blue-coat days, whether he shared with Coleridge the dainties with which, much to the boy's confusion, his dear old maiden aunt would waylay him, as she sat on the steps of the coal-cellar and patiently waited for the boy to pass to school, that so she might smuggle some bit of sweetstuff to his mouth from the pudding-basin carefully concealed beneath her shawl, we know not, but that he shared his shy heart with him, and made Coleridge his hero, we do know. Two years his junior, for Lamb was born in February, 1775, he had then learned to listen to the rich discourse of the "inspired charity-boy"² with delight that had no envy about it; and when Coleridge came to London, full of hopes and glorious schemes, Charles Lamb would come often in the evening to the little public-house in Smithfield called the 'Salutation and Cat,' and let Coleridge's golden discourse on "Fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," sink deep

¹ *Final Memorials of Lamb*, by Talfourd, Vol. II., p. 196 *et seq.*

² *Essays of Elia*, "Christ's Hospital."

into his soul. "Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth whom I can call a friend,"¹ so wrote Lamb in 1796. "You are the only correspondent, and I might add, the only friend, I have in the world. I go nowhere, and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society, and I am left alone. . . . You dwell in my heart of hearts."²

Yet had Lamb another friend, Charles Lloyd of Brathay Hall, of whom he once wrote, "I am dearly fond of Charles Lloyd, he is all goodness"; of whom he sang:

"Long, long, within my aching heart,
The grateful sense³ shall cherished be;
I'll think less meanly of myself
That Lloyd will sometimes think of me."⁴

But Lloyd had left the 'Bull's Mouth Inn' and Coleridge had left the 'Salutation and Cat' in town. They were within a few miles of one another now, away at the English Lakes, and other attractions—remembered so well, since his visit to Coleridge at Nether Stowey—would appeal to Charles Lamb's heart.

There were at Greta Hall now, the "beloved wife" Sarah—"Dear Sarah—to me also so very dear, because so very kind,"⁵—as he once wrote—and the "dear, dear little David Hartley, that minutest of minute philosophers," after whose welfare, even down to the matter of his cutting

¹ *Lamb's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 41.

² *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 27.

³ Of a holiday with Lloyd.

⁴ *Poems, Plays, and Essays*, "To Charles Lloyd, An Unexpected Visitor."

⁵ *Lamb's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 142.

his first tooth, Charles Lamb so constantly enquired in his affectionate letters.

Already in 1800 had Lloyd done his best to get Lamb "to come and see the wonders of the English Lakes." "I need not describe," Lamb had then said to his friend Manning, "the expectations which such an one as myself, pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes," but he added, "hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. . . . I am not romance-bit about Nature. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said), is but as a house to dwell in.

"Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of fire, and stop thief; inns of court with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, 'Jeremy Taylor's,' 'Burtons on Melancholy,' and 'Religio Medici's' on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London! with-the-many-sins. O, city, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang!"¹

So wrote Lamb to Manning, on his first invitation to the English Lakes, in 1800.

¹ *Lamb's Letters*, Vol. I., pp. 181-182.

But a second invitation came in January of 1801, this time from Wordsworth at Grasmere, and the cockney in Lamb's heart that once confessed that all of the country it cared for, were the begrimed and stunted trees in disused churchyard corners, and the side courts and nooks that border Thames Street, was now too full of London delight to admit of his accepting the invitation, even if his purse had not been as it was, empty.

This was his reply :

"I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation to Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere ; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet-Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses ; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden ; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles ;—life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night ; the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon the houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade— all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these

sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are you, so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

“My attachments are all local, purely local—I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry and books) to groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book-case which has followed me about like a faithful dog (only exceeding him in knowledge), wherever I have moved, old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school—these are my mistresses—have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you, I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends with anything. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind; and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm, are all the inventions of men, and

assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.¹

"Give my kindest love, and my sister's, to D. and yourself. And a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite. Thank you for liking my play! C. L."²

One does not wonder that Wordsworth in his lines, *Written after the Death of Charles Lamb*, owns:

"Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my friend,
But more in show than truth,"

for there came a third invitation to the prisoner to the "dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood," to come and see the hills and vales; this time alas! without promise of seeing Wordsworth, for Wordsworth was away,* but with promise of sight of Skiddaw. The invitation was sent from Greta Hall early in August of 1802, and I expect it conveyed to Lamb and his sister Mary a promise that they shall not only see Calvert, but the Lloyds and Thomas Clarkson, the anti-slave philanthropist at Eusemere or Ullswater.

His account of what he saw and did may be gathered from his letter to Manning, dated 24th September, 1802:

"I set out with Mary to Keswick without giving Coleridge any notice, for, my time being precious, did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side

¹ Wordsworth's poem, *Joanna*, which describes the effect of laughter echoing in the mountains.

² *Lamb's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 212.

of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains, great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, etc. We thought we had got into fairy-land. But that went off (and it never came again; while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets), and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose that I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, etc., I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night like an intrenchment; gone to bed as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Eolian harp, and an old sofa, half bed, etc. And all looking out upon the fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren. What a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people, and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London, and past much time with us; he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married. So we have seen Keswick,

Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater, I forget the name, to which we travelled on a very sultry day over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied myself that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before ; they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about and about, making you giddy ; and then Scotland afar off, and the Border countries, so famous in song and ballad ! It was a day that will stand out like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks, I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controuled by any one to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet Street and the Strand

are better places to live in for good and all than amidst Skiddaw. Still I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year, two, three years among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still Skiddaw is a fine creature.”¹

Skiddaw had asserted itself as a perpetual power in the London-loving mind. “I feel,” wrote he to Coleridge of this visit, “that I shall remember your mountains to the last day that I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the lady.”²

And something else beside Skiddaw and its breezy view had charmed Lamb. The little two-year-old Derwent Coleridge in his yellow coat, “Stumpy Canary” as they called him, had won his heart side by side with David Hartley, the six-year-old philosopher; for Sara Coleridge tells us that Lamb was charmed with the little fellow, and much struck with the quickness of eye and memory displayed by him in naming the subjects of prints in books. “Pipos, Pitpos” was Derwent’s name for the “striped opossum,” and this he would utter with a nonchalant air, as much as to say, of course I know it all as pat as possible. Lamb always after that in his letters to Greta Hall asked after his friend “Pipos.”

¹ *Lamb's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 221.

² *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 220.

CHAPTER III

GRETA HALL

THE SOUTHEYS COME TO GRETA HALL : DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE
AND ITS HOUSEHOLD : CHARACTERISTICS OF ROBERT SOUTHEY :
SOUTHEY AND COLERIDGE : SOUTHEY AND WORDSWORTH

IN that same month and year—September of 1802, when Lamb was writing his letters of thanks to Coleridge, and the account of his conversion to the charm of mountain scenery—there was born in Southey's home at Bristol, after some years of childlessness, "a little snub-nosed, grey-eyed thing," Margaret. If it was grief for the death of a clever child, Herbert,—“a boy whom every eye that looked on loved”—which afterwards enchained Southey in the Keswick Vale, it was, alas, the death of this little darling Margaret, in August of 1803, that drove him from Bristol to the North.

“Edith,” wrote Southey, “will be nowhere so well as with her sister Coleridge. She has a little girl some six months old”—this was the Sara, the dark eyed Sara, sung of afterwards in Wordsworth's *Triad*, who was born at

Greta Hall, three days before Christmas of 1802—"I shall try and graft her into the wound while it is yet fresh." ¹

Southey had determined upon a sight of the Lakes, and a visit to Greta Hall and Wordsworth, as long ago as 1800, when away at Lisbon, and had written to Coleridge of his proposal.

The letter in answer from S. T. Coleridge, which he found when he returned to England, is dated April 13, 1801, and may be transcribed :

"My dear Southey,—I received your kind letter on the evening before last, and I trust that this will arrive at Bristol just in time to rejoice with them that rejoice. Alas ! you will have found the dear old place sadly *minused* by the removal of Davy. It is one of the evils of long silence that, when one recommences the correspondence, one has so much to say that one can say nothing. I have enough—with what I have suffered, and with what I have heard, exclusive of all that I hope, and all that I intend—I have enough to pass away a great deal of time with, were you on a desert isle and I your *Friday*. But at present I purpose to speak only of myself, relatively to Keswick and to you.

"Our house stands on a low hill, the whole front of which is one field and an enormous garden, nine-tenths of which is a nursery garden. Behind the house is an orchard, and a small wood on a steep slope, at the foot of which flows the river Greta, which winds round and catches the evening lights in the front of the house. In

¹ *Southey's Letters*, ed. by J. W. Warter, Vol. I., p. 229.

front we have a giant's camp—an encamped army of tent-like mountains, which, by an inverted arch, gives a view of another vale. On our right the lovely vale and the wedge-shaped lake of Bassenthwaite; and on our left Derwentwater and Lodore full in view, and the fantastic mountains of Borrodale. Behind us the massy Skiddaw, smooth, green, high, with two chasms and a tent-like ridge in the larger. A fairer scene you have not seen in all your wanderings. Without going from our own grounds we have all that can please a human being. As to books, my landlord, who dwells next door, has a very respectable library, which he has put with mine—histories, encyclopædias, and all the modern gentry. But then I can have, when I choose, free access to the princely library of Sir Gilfrid Lawson, which contains the noblest collection of travels and natural history of, perhaps, any private library in England; besides this, there is the Cathedral library of Carlisle, from whence I can have any books sent to me that I wish; in short, I may truly say that I command all the libraries in the county. . . . The house is full twice as large as we want; it hath more rooms in it than Allfoxen; you might have a bed-room, parlour, study, &c., &c.; and there would always be rooms to spare for your or my visitors. In short, for situation and convenience—and when I mention the name of Wordsworth, for society of men of intellect—I know no place in which you and Edith would find yourselves so well suited.”¹

¹ *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. by his son, Rev. C. C. Southey, Vol. II., p. 146.

The three united libraries proved an irresistible charm, and notwithstanding that a vague offer had been made to Southey that he should go off as Consul's secretary to Palermo and Constantinople, his sympathy with Coleridge was strong upon him, and he felt drawn to Keswick.

"Time and absence," he wrote in July, "make strange work with our affections; but mine are ever returning to rest upon you. I have other and dear friends, but none with whom the whole of my being is intimate—with whom every thought and feeling can amalgamate."¹ And he goes on, "In about ten days we shall be ready to set forward for Keswick, where, if it were not for the rains, and fogs, and the frosts, I should probably be content to winter; but the climate deters me."² Southey did not then know, as he afterwards found, that it was the winter in the Keswick Valley that is *par excellence* the dry and the beautiful time of the year, and that fogs are almost unheard of phenomena.

He came, but he was not overcharmed. He had been too long abroad not to be always comparing Spanish scenery, on the grand scale, with our lesser hills and valleys. "These lakes are like rivers; but oh for the Mondego and the Tagus! And these mountains, beautifully indeed are they shaped and grouped; but oh for the great Monchique! and for Cintra, my paradise!—I miss the sun in heaven, having been upon a short allowance of sunbeams these last ten days." Other places, too, competed with Keswick for the future laureate's homing—Richmond and the silvery Thames, and the hills of Wales

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. II., p. 151.

² *Idem*.

and their clear amber streams, called for him. A home in Glamorganshire, in the vale of Neath—"one of the loveliest spots in Great Britain," named Maes Gwyn—had great attractions for him, not the least that, by living there, he could study the Welsh language. Thither Southey would immediately have gone to write his history of Portugal, there he intended to enter into a grand confederacy with the animal world; to have a cat, a dog, an otter, an osprey, a snake, and a toad, and all his books about him; but at the last moment a disagreement with the owner of the house, about some necessary alteration, obliged him to drop Maes Gwyn. And thus, when Bristol became intolerable, owing to the death, by "water on the brain," of poor little Margery, their first-born, away to Keswick, on Coleridge's invitation, came Robert Southey and his wife Edith. He was full of projects for a Bibliotheca Britannica and his book on Portugal, hard at work upon the revision of 'Madoc,' and determined to shut the door of grief by incessant mental excitement and literary study.

Southey and his wife arrived in Keswick on Sept. 7, 1803, and writing to his brother Tom, the lieutenant on board the *Galatea* next day, he tells him, "Here my spirits suffer from the sight of little Sara who is about her size." However, he adds bravely, "God knows I do not repine, and that in my soul I feel His will is best. These things do one good: they loosen one by one the roots that rivet us to earth, they fix and confirm our faith till the thought of death becomes so inseparably connected with the hope of meeting those

whom we have lost, that death itself is no longer considered an evil.”¹ I quote this because the man who wrote these words lived for forty years at Greta Hall in just the same firm faith and constant thought of re-union, as one by one his friends passed away ‘into the silent land!’ Ay, and he found medicine here to heal his heart’s sickness. “Would that you could see these lakes and mountains! How wonderful they are! How awful in their beauty! All the poet part in me,” he wrote, “will be fed and fostered here. I feel already in tune.”²

“Nothing in England can be more beautiful than the site of this house. Had this country but the sky of Portugal, it would leave me nothing to wish for. . . . and Coleridge is company enough. . . . I have been round the Lake, and up Skiddaw, and along the river Greta, and to Lodore.”³

To Danvers he wrote in October : “The panorama from the summit (of Skiddaw) is very grand. The summit is covered with loose stones split by the frosts, and thus gradually are they reduced to soil and washed down to the glens, so that, like old women, Skiddaw must grow shorter. To-day,” he adds, “I have been tracking the river Greta, which, instead of *Great A* ought to have been called *Great S*; but its name hath a good and most apt meaning, ‘The loud Lamerter.’ It is a lovely stream. I have often forded such among the mountains of Algarve, and lingered to look at them with a wistful

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. II., p. 226.

² *Idem*.

³ *Southey's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 232.

eye, if I may so express myself, with a feeling that it was the only time I was ever to behold the scene before me so beautiful! . . . God knows I often looked upon my poor child with the same melancholy.”¹

So by “the loud Lamentor” did the man of sorrow pass that first autumn, which, so far as weather went, was an uncommonly fine one; and lucky it was he had come in autumn, for as he said himself to his friend Duppa, in December of that year: “Autumn is the best season to see the country, but spring, and even winter, is better than summer, for in settled fine weather there are none of those goings on in heaven which at other times give these scenes such an endless variety.”² And to Miss Barker he also wrote: “Summer is not the season for this country; Coleridge says, and says well, that then it is like a theatre at noon. There are *no goings on* under a clear sky. . . . The very snow, which you would perhaps think must monotonise the mountains, gives new varieties; it brings out their recesses and designates all their inequalities . . . and it reflects such tints of saffron, or fawn, or rose colour to the evening sun.”³

Southey did not feel at first any “root-striking” at Greta Hall, but the hills that had conquered Lamb were victorious in their power to comfort him and give him peace and strength. And as he sat each day in his great study-room upstairs, in which, as he said, he felt

¹ *Southey's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 240.

² *Southey's Life*, Vol. II., p. 239.

³ *Southey's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 257.

“at first like a cock-robin in an empty church,” he gazed on a view described in his *Vision of Judgment*.

“Mountain and lake and vale ; the valley disrobed of its verdure ;
Derwent retaining yet from eve a glassy reflection
Where his expanded breast, then still and smooth as a mirror,
Under the woods reposed ; the hills that, calm and majestic,
Lifted their heads in the silent sky, from far Glaramara
Bleacrag, and Maidenmawr, to Grizedal and westernmost Withop.”¹

The restfulness of the scene, its calm and its silence, sank into his soul, so that when the spring of 1804 came, though it brought not for him the violet, the cowslip, and the nightingale, these lakes and mountains gave him “a deep joy for which nothing else could compensate.”

Of guests at Greta Hall in that first autumn we know that Hazlitt was one ; and Wilkinson, the worthy clergyman, whose drawings of the English Lakes District are, if somewhat conventional, still faithful so far as outline goes, being then in Keswick, was often up at the house ; General Peachy was at the Island ; Thomas Spedding at Mirehouse ; Calvert at Greta Bank, as the new-built Windy Brow was called ; and Sir Gilfrid Lawson and his great library were firm friends before Christmas came.

As to the disposition of the house, the Coleridges occupied the left-hand half of it, which again was shared in part by the Jacksons. In the lower right-hand room called *Peter*, the combined family dined. In the lower room just opposite, named *Paul*, afterwards called ‘Hartley’s Parlour,’ they breakfasted in common.

¹ *Vision of Judgment*, Part I., The Trance.

Up above stairs, over Peter and Paul, ran the great main room, the outlook from which is familiar enough to the reader of the *Doctor*, from the vignette on its title page. Here the elders took tea, and received visitors; here too, Southey passed his never varying and laborious days with pen and book, for this was Southey's study; this room became in course of time filled by the shelves that held the famous 'Cottonian Library.' Next it, and to the north, was Coleridge's study, sometimes called the organ room. Except for the 'Clog and Lantern room,' just beyond Aunt Lovell's bedroom at the foot of the stairs, and for the little side bedroom at the head of the stairs, where Sara Coleridge used to lie awake and hear the Greta roar and the forge hammer clang, there are no other rooms that need be described.

As to the household at what Southey used jocularly to call 'The Ant Hill,' in that first season of 1803, there were beside the Coleridges and Southey's and Aunt Lovell, Southey's beloved dog Dapper, and Jackson's dog Cupid, and what Southey called 'a noble jackass.' Dear old Nurse Wilsey too, an aboriginal inhabitant of the house, and Betty Thompson, whose affection and long service are inscribed upon her master's, the Laureate's, tombstone in Crosthwaite Churchyard, formed part of the family. Cats galore, Bianchi, Pulcheria, Othello, the Zombi, Rumpelstilzchan, and many others with names as fanciful, abounded, for Nurse Wilsey shared with her master his love of poor puss. Indeed, when the old woman was carried to her rest, one of the tabby retainers at Greta

Hall went down in pitiable grief with the funeral procession, refused to leave the grave, and died of a broken heart upon it, three days after.

Professor Wilson of Elleray had his friend, Billy Balmer by surname ; Southey had his friend Billy also, for general serving-man. A character was this Willy, who made up for domestic infelicities by such affection as the children of Greta Hall could bestow ; for Willy had a wife of whom he always spoke with awe as being ‘moonstruck,’ because he noticed that her temper grew worse at the full of the moon, and he used to give Southey a terrible account of a battle royal he had had with this queer spouse, which lasted three whole days and three whole nights. Then there was James Lawson, the carpenter, whose white painted tombstone is the first one sees as one enters the Crosthwaite Churchyard ; handy James, replaced afterwards by Glover, the factotum and joiner. Memorable man that Lawson for his power of creation, and of making something out of nothing, at least in little Derwent Coleridge’s eyes ; for Derwent once asked by his father, “Who made you ?” replied, “James Lawson, the carpenter, father” ; and to the question, “And what did he make you of ?” he answered, “The stuff he makes wood of, he sawed me off, and I did not like it.” Then down street was Dan the Clogger, who clogged the whole tribe at Greta Hall, and probably made that pair of clogs for Southey still preserved in the Keswick Museum.

But the most remarkable member of the household was Moses or Job, the little David Hartley :

"O ! blessed vision, happy child,
Thou art so exquisitely wild !"¹

He was then seven years old, for he was born on Sept. 19, 1796, and his delight was to get his father to talk metaphysics to him. "Few *men*," said Southey, "understand him so perfectly." "'The pity is,' said he one day to his father, who was expressing some wonder that he was not so pleased as he expected with riding in a wheelbarrow, 'the pity is that I've always thinking of my thoughts.'"² And his imagination was wonderful. He had made a list of the kings of England that were to be ; told stories of the monstrous beast, the Rabzeze Kallaton, whose skeleton was outside his skin ; and used actually to grow terrified with his own mental inventions. Here is a letter from Robert Southey to Charles Danvers in 1805, when Hartley was nine years old, that gives such a picture of this remarkable child as makes one understand the touching lines³ in which Wordsworth sketched Hartley's character :

"Hartley is from home, visiting Mr. Wordsworth's sisters near Penrith. It is impossible to give you any adequate idea of his oddities ; for he is the oddest of all God's creatures, and becomes quainter and quainter every day. It is not easy to conceive, what is perfectly true, that he is totally destitute of anything like modesty, yet without the slightest tinge of impudence in his nature. His religion makes one of the most humorous parts of his character. 'I'm a boy of a very religious turn,' he says, for he always talks of himself, and

¹ *To H. C.*, p. 184.

² *Southey's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 241.

³ *To H. C.*, p. 184.

examines his own character, just as if he was speaking of another person, and as impartially. Every night he makes an extempore prayer aloud; but it is always in bed, and not till he is comfortable there and got into the mood. When he is ready he touches Mrs. Wilson, who sleeps with him, and says, 'Now listen!' and off he sets like a preacher. If he has been behaving amiss, away he goes for the Bible, and looks out for something appropriate to his case in the Psalms or the book of Job. The other day, after he had been in a violent passion, he chose out a chapter against wrath. 'Ah! that suits me!' The Bible also is resorted to whenever he ails anything, or else the Prayer Book. He once made a pun upon occasion of the bellyache, though I will not say that he designed it. 'Oh, Mrs. Wilson, I've got the *colic*! read me the Epistle and Gospel for the day.' In one part of his character he seems to me strikingly to resemble his father, in the affection he has for those who are present with him, and the little he cares about them when he is out of their sight. It is not possible for one human being to love another more dearly than Mrs. Wilson loves him, and he is as fond of her as it is in his nature to be of anything, and probably loves her better than he does anybody else. Last summer she was dangerously ill, and Hartley in consequence came and lived at home. He never manifested the slightest uneasiness or concern about her, nor ever would go near her. I do not know whether I should wish to have such a child or not. There is not the slightest evil in his disposition, but it wants something

to make it steadily good ; physically and morally there is a defect of courage. He is afraid of receiving pain to such a degree, that, if any person begins to read a newspaper, he will leave the room, lest there should be anything shocking in it. This is the explication of his conduct during Mrs. Wilson's illness. He would not see her because it would give him pain, and when he was out of sight he contrived to forget her. I fear that, if he lives, he will dream away life like his father, too much delighted with his own ideas ever to embody them, or suffer them, if he can help it, to be disturbed. I gave him *Robinson Crusoe* two years ago. He never has read, nor will read, beyond Robinson's departure from the island. 'No,' he says, 'he does not care about him afterwards, and never will know.'"¹

Dear old Nurse Wilsey ! God bless her for her patient kindness to that child. There are those who still remember her close-fitting little poke bonnet, her neat white tucker inside, her white neckerchief pinned across her breast, and her blue 'bedgown,' as it was called.

Stumpy Canary was there too, to put his head into the room, and laugh and bang out of it ; and dark-eyed Sara, born in September of 1802, lay in her cradle and cooed ; but not yet had been born their Southey cousin, "the Edithling," with "no more beauty than a young dodo";² nor radiant Isabel or Bluff King Hal, as she was called ; nor Bertha the tender-hearted, "My dark-eyed Bertha, timid as a dove" ; nor garrulous Kate, "as round as a mushroom button" ; nor the two boys,

¹ *Southey's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 311.

² *Idem*, p. 275.

Herbert of the swift precocious mind, who died at the age of ten on April 17, 1816, whose grave—notwithstanding such offer as a salary of £1000 a year, if only Southey would go to London and write leaders for the *Times*—kept the Laureate a willing prisoner to the vale; and Cuthbert, the boy born in 1821, who had determined as a three years old child to be Archbishop of Canterbury, and died as vicar of Askham, near Penrith, in March of 1889.

The manner of life at Greta Hall was unvarying. They lived and went by clock-work, nay, better than most of their clocks, for these went at various hours. The routine never varied; if it had done so the prodigious output of literary work of a high order that came from Southey's pen would have been impossible.

Punctual as the quarter boys of St. Dunstan, Southey might have been seen any day in the forty years he dwelt at Greta Hall, in black coat and corduroy trousers, strolling out before breakfast, or sitting at his desk in his study till two; then, after dinner, with black or black-blue peaked cap, and fawn coloured, all-round coat, not swallow lapped, very neatly dressed—"never seed him wi' a button off in my life," an old man once said to me—starting for his constitutional, at a three mile walking pace, with book in hand, and clogs on his feet. The children sometimes with him, borne on "their noble jackass," sometimes with servants, bairns and all bound for a pic-nic on the lake;¹

¹ W. S. Landor's Poems—*To Southey*.

"From Arno's side I hear thy Derwent flow,
And see methinks the lake below
Reflect thy graceful progeny, more fair
And radiant than the purest waters are."

sometimes pestling away at black currants for black currant wine ; sometimes building, all the household of them, the bridge of stepping stones across the Greta, which Southey commenced in 1809, and which was constantly needing a little repair. But back again would Southey come to tea and talk in the great library at six, and there, after the London paper was read, the lamps were lit, and he wrote his letters, for he generally made a point of replying to his correspondents on the same day. Such letters ! so full of humour and of his own best thoughts ; I do not wonder Wordsworth thought that, in them, was Southey's best and deepest expression of himself. Then, perhaps, would come a finishing touch to some MSS., prose or poetry, till supper time came, and ten o'clock ; and after that, goodnight, and so to bed, to be waked, perhaps, by dreams of the children that were dead, and then to sleep, till the next day brought its literary burden.

But if we had met him on his wandering we should have been struck by two or three things. First, that he seldom passed a little child without patting it on the head, for Southey loved children ; he would break off in his work when they invaded his library to tell them a tale, to imitate a whole farmyard, and fill the house with the moanings of a menagerie ; their deaths did but make these children dearer, and every child he met reminded him of his own Margery, Herbert, and Isabel. When Herbert died, 'died the best part' of Southey too. He was never quite himself in spirit afterwards. Wilkinson, the friend of Wordsworth, met Southey in 1816, at Lowther Castle and writes :—"I lately spent an evening

with Southey at Lowther; he seemed cast down, having lost his oldest, if not his only, son lately.”¹ Had Wilkinson met him twenty years later, and mentioned Herbert’s name, he would have heard Southey sigh almost with a sigh of agony, and seen the mist gather in his eyes. Next we should have noted that he did not speak unless spoken to; and then, that he lifted up his face skywards, as if he were short-sighted and must look under his spectacles,—not that he wore them. We should have observed too, his extreme lankiness and long-leggedness of figure, his fine bushy head of dark hair—“finest heead of hair ivver man cud hev wished to hev hed, up till t’ last, was Soothey’s”—and his coal-black flashing eyes.

And where should we have met him? His favourite walks were the terrace road under Applethwaite, Latrigg, Skiddaw Dod, Causey Pike, Newlands, and Newlands Beck, whereto, when Tom Southey was at Emerald Bank, he oft-time resorted, and, plunging in the pools, disported himself like any river god. Brundholme Woods above the Greta too was a well-loved walk with him, “yet the scenery,” he says in his *Colloquies* “upon this river, where it passes under the woody side of Latrigg, is of the finest and most remarkable kind.”²

“Ambiguo lapsa refluitque fluitque
Occurrensque sibi venturas aspicit undas.”

There is no English stream to which this truly Ovidian description can more accurately be applied. Oft-time to

¹ “Thomas Wilkinson,” by Mary Carr, p. 29, reprinted from *Friends’ Quarterly Examiner*.

² *Southey’s Colloquies, The River Greta*, Vol. II., p. 151, 2nd ed.

the Druid Circle would he go, but Walla Crag and Watendlath had special charms for him. Yet, perhaps his favourite round of all was through the Great Wood, up Cat Ghyll, between Falcon Crag and Walla Crag, and so home by Rakefoot and the Moor, or by Spring's Farm.

In his *Colloquies* with Sir Thomas More, that noble-hearted statesman reveals himself to Southey, when the poet is seated on the ash tree that still overhangs the bed of the stream of Cat Ghyll, halfway up the ascent between Falcon and Walla Crag; the stream often forming a cascade, runs over the smooth rocky pavement, just at the ford there, and takes its colour from the rock over which it runs.

There, in imagination, you can see the whole Greta Hall household of children enjoying their pic-nic on the bank above. Southey is dreaming of his delightful days at Cintra, and hears in the sound of the waters, the gurgling of the tanks and fountains of that earthly paradise; presently he takes his little miniature Amsterdam edition of the *Utopia*, date 1629, from his waistcoat pocket, and reads till it is time to proceed, then raises his eyes, and, behold, the author of the book he is intent on, Sir Thomas More, stands before him.

“‘Let the young ones go forward,’ said More, ‘they will neither see nor hear me, . . . God and good Angels bless them.’” “Of all sights which can soften and humanize the heart of man, there is none that ought so surely to reach it as that of innocent children enjoying the happiness which is their proper and natural portion.”¹

¹ Southey's *Colloquies*, *Walla Crag*, Vol. I., p. 124.

We can sit on the same ash tree—Westall, the artist, has given so faithful a portrait of Southey, seated on the overhanging bough, that it is recognisable—and we can hear the same stream to-day ; perhaps, in fancy, may see again the gentle Southey and the children that grew up about him !

And at no better place than this, where our God has piled up Falcon Crag, and keeps the stream of Cat Ghyll fresh for the service of man, and its voice a perpetual hymn of benison, can we hear the appeal of good Sir Thomas More to see that in our generation innocent childhood shall have its share of happiness, and that the little ones of our great cities may enjoy these country sights and sounds.

But Coleridge—full of imaginary aches and pains, and some real ones, his mind as restless as if it had St. Vitus' Dance, eternal activity without action—felt that the climate was not good for his rheumatism. "He is worse in his body than you seem to believe," wrote Southey of him, "but the main cause lies in his own management of himself, or rather want of management. 'I will begin to-morrow,' he says ; poor fellow ! there is not anything which gives me so much pain as the witnessing such a waste of unequalled power."¹

And so, for his health's sake, poor, procrastinating Coleridge, miserable about trifles, and a prey to hypochondria, packed off in the spring of 1804 to Malta. He came back to England—to Keswick for a short time—in 1806. I do not think he ever contemplated permanently

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. II., p. 277.

remaining at Greta Hall. He domiciled himself, in 1807, with Wordsworth at Allan Bank, and there projected *The Friend*.

In 1810, notwithstanding that his wife took a new lease of her share of Greta Hall in hope of his returning, he left the Lakes, in company with Basil Montagu, for London, and afterwards went to Hammersmith to dwell with Mr. Morgan, a Bristol friend; removing thence, to dwell for the last twenty years of his life with his friend and biographer, Gillman of Highgate, at whose house he, as the epitaph in Highgate New Churchyard tells us, "quitted the body of this death, July 25, 1834, in the sixty-second year of his age."

As one's mind wanders after this wandering star, from the fatherless little ones, and the patient wife at Greta Hall, one cannot help remembering that Coleridge fought his besetting sin bravely, beat down the opium fiend, and died professedly sorry for his short-comings. He wrote his own epitaph, let it speak for him :

"Stop, Christian passer-by !—Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod,
A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he.—
O lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.,
That he who many a year with toil of breath,
Found death in life, may here find life in death !
Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame
He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ.
Do thou the same !"¹

But with all this sorrow in our hearts for S. T. C., it is to the gentlest-hearted gentleman of the best of schools,

¹ Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, ed. by J. Dykes Campbell, p. 210.

Robert Southey, that we turn with gratitude for all he did for his brother-in-law's family at Greta Hall.

For to Southey, in common with Charles Lamb, had been given a love of children that was wonderful, passing almost the love of women. Hartley Coleridge, "the children's laureate" as he has been called, could not have learnt his passion for the beauty of children and their ways in a better school than there, in Southey's house.

Not only did Southey care for his own family with pathetic devotion, and enter into their lives, their joys and sorrows, but he took upon him the care of Coleridge's family also. There is something very touching in the way in which, with all his regret for Coleridge's failings, he never failed to fulfil the trust that those failings imposed on him.

And though he grieved for Coleridge's curious bewilderment of moral sense, he never lost sight of the intellectual brilliance of the wayward man, nor ever spoke dispraise of his capacity for noble feeling, nor refused to recognise that the faults of the man had something constitutional in them.

Very touching too is it to note how soon the effect of his piety and foster-fatherly care for the young Coleridge children makes itself felt in the household.

Southey came to Greta Hall to find that Coleridge, who wrote :

" O sweeter than the Marriage feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the Kirk
With a goodly company !

“ To walk together to the Kirk,
 And all together pray ;
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men and babes, and loving friends,
 And Youths and Maidens gay ! ”¹

had three children, Hartley, Derwent, and Sara unbaptised, and that, though he had once intended taking them to the font—as a letter to Tom Poole of August 14, 1800, tells us, in which he begs him to come up in the autumn and be Derwent’s god-father—he had not carried out his intention. None of them had been yet publicly received into “ the congregation of Christ’s flock ” and sealed “ with the sign of the cross ” ; but in the old Baptismal Register one may read these words :

BAPTISED, 1803.

Nov. 2. HARTLEY, son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Sarah his wife, late Fricker : born Sept. 19, 1796.

DERWENT, son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Sarah his wife : born Sept. 14, 1800.

SARA, daughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Sarah his wife : born Dec. 23, 1802.

May one not see Southey’s foster-fatherly hand in this matter ?

Such was this knightly, this true brotherly and *fatherly* man—this gentleman, head and shoulders above the literati of his day in pure unselfishness, unworldliness, and simple-minded honesty ; such this true defender of the sanctities of house and home ; this pattern father, husband, and friend ; this exemplar of unostentatious piety ; this high-souled, pure-hearted, patient man ; this genial

¹ *Ancient Mariner* (as it appeared in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798).

host. Such was this lofty scholar, this humble, child-like doer of each day's work to the full reach of his power; this encyclopædia of learning; this grave thinker; this poet of his time.

Poet of his time? But it may be said we demur to Southey's claim to Laureate honours. He was an accomplished reviewer; a splendid writer of forcible prose; an accomplished and most humorous letter-writer, but a poet—no. Against this dictum let us set the dictum of his own day; and remember what kind of a day it was, and from what an age of sham and weakness Southey helped to deliver English verse by his forcible Miltonic phrasing, as found in *Roderick*; by his truth to facts of common nature, as is seen in old Kaspar's moralising, and the little child's wonder in the *Battle of Blenheim*; or in these lines:

“Thou has been called, O Sleep! the friend of Woe,
But 'tis the happy who have call'd thee so”;¹

by his truth to facts of natural scenery, as found in the opening lines of the *Vision of Judgment*. One can understand Charles Lamb's writing to Coleridge, “With Joan of Arc I have been delighted, amazed. I had not presumed to expect anything of such excellence from Southey. Why the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry.”² And we can endorse Sir Henry Taylor's words: “As long as his mind lasted he

¹ *Curse of Kēhama*, Canto XV., Stanza 12.

² *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb*, by T. N. Talfourd, Vol. I., p. 19.

lived laborious days for the sake of his family, and of others whom in his generosity he helped to support. Yet all the labours of all his days did not do more than make preparations for the three great works which it was the object and ambition of his life to accomplish. Of what he did accomplish a portion will not soon be forgotten. There were greater poets in his generation ; there were men of a deeper and more far-reaching philosophic faculty ; but take him for all in all, his earnest and fervid piety, his moral strength, the magnitude and variety of his powers, the field which he covered in literature, and the beauty of his life ; it might be said of him justly, and with no straining of the truth, that of all contemporaries he was the greatest *man*."

And now we ask, how did this, the greatest *man* of his age, impress his contemporaries ?

Lovell, the young Quaker poet who had just married Miss Fricker, the future Mrs. Southey's sister, introduced Robert Southey to Cottle at Bristol, in 1794. "Never," says Cottle, "will the impression be effaced, produced on me by this young man. Tall, dignified, possessing great suavity of manners ; an eye, piercing, with a countenance full of genius, kindness, and intelligence, I gave him at once the right hand of fellowship, and, to the present moment it has never on either side been withdrawn."¹

De Quincey, who saw Southey for the first time on November 6, 1807, had walked from Penrith, dined at Threlkeld, and come on in the dark. The front door

¹ Cottle's *Early Recollections*, 1837, Vol. I., p. 6.

of Greta Hall was opened, and he saw Mrs. Coleridge and a gentleman of very striking appearance, whom he could not doubt was Southey, standing within to greet him. De Quincey writes: "His hair was black, and yet his complexion was fair; his eyes I believe to be hazel and large, but I will not vouch for that fact; his nose aquiline; and he has a remarkable habit of looking up into the air, as if looking at abstractions.

"The expression of his face was that of a very aspiring man. So far it was even noble, as it conveyed a feeling of a serene and gentle pride, habitually familiar with elevating subjects of contemplation.

"And yet it was impossible that this pride could have been offensive to anybody, chastened as it was by the most unaffected modesty, and this modesty made evident and prominent by the constant expression of reverence for the really great men of the age, and for all the great patriarchs of our literature.

"The point in which Southey's manner failed the most in conciliating regard was, perhaps, in what related to the external expressions of friendliness. No man could be more sincerely hospitable—no man more essentially disposed to give up even his time (the possession which he most valued) to the service of his friends. But there was an air of distance and reserve about him—the reserve of a lofty self-respecting mind, but perhaps a little too freezing—in his treatment of all persons who were not amongst the corps of his ancient fireside friends.

"Still, even towards the veriest strangers, it is but

justice to notice his extreme courtesy in sacrificing his literary employments for the day, whatever they might be, to the duty (for such he made it) of doing the honours of the lake and the adjacent mountains."¹

Scott's son-in-law, Lockhart, who wrote letters from the Lakes for *Maga* under the pseudonym of 'Philip Kempferhausen,' saw Southey in 1819, and wrote an account of his accidental interview with the author of *Thalaba* and *Madoc*, which was owed to his intrusion in the grounds of Greta Hall and his consequent apology to the amiable master of the house.

"His figure is rather tall and slim, but apparently muscular, and has altogether an air of gentility about it. He has nothing whatever about him of the stiffness or awkwardness of a great student; but, on the contrary, were he a mere ordinary person, I should describe him as a genteel-looking man, possessing much natural elegance, or even grace. But his head and countenance bespeak the poet. His hair is black, and bushy, and strong, and gives him a bold, free, and even dignified look; his face is sharp; his nose high; and his eyes, without having that piercing look which is often felt to be disagreeable, because too searching, in the eyes of men of genius, are, without any exception, the most acute and intelligent I ever beheld. Yet I believe he is near-sighted; and this seems to have given him a habit of elevating his face when he speaks, as if he were looking up, which brings all his features fully before you, and seemed to me to impart to his whole demeanour a singular charm

¹ *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets*: De Quincey, ch. iv.

of sincerity and independence. His voice seemed to me at first to be shrill and weak, and perhaps it is so, but there is in it a kind of musical wildness which I could not help considering to be characteristic of the author of *Thalaba*; and when he chanced to recite a few lines of poetry it became quite impassioned.

“After tea, during which happy meal I saw, in a thousand little circumstances not to be misunderstood, the amiable heart of that poet who has excelled all his contemporaries in the delineation of domestic blessedness, he led me into his study. Fit study for a poet! On first entering it, I almost felt as if I had stepped out into the calm evening air. One softened blaze of beauty burst upon my eyes. The windows commanded an entire view of two noble lakes—Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite—and of a richly wooded valley, by which they are separated from each other, and yet bound together by a river that covers it with fertility and verdure. Vast ranges of mountains terminated the prospect at the head of the higher lake, while the blue waters of Bassenthwaite seemed to die away in the skies. I gazed on the transcendent landscape, and then on the poet—so worthy of each other. His face seemed kindling with pride when he said that he considered these lakes as his own, that he had lived twenty years on their banks, and would probably die there. He pointed out to me some of the objects which he thought most characteristic of the scene before us; and then, with great simplicity, said, ‘You have now been reading the great book of Nature—here are the volumes of men!’ I saw one of the noblest

private libraries in England—certainly the richest of any in Spanish and Portuguese literature. It seemed to me, that Mr. Southey's air and manner insensibly changed 'from lively to severe,' as we sat together surrounded by that magnificent collection of books which his intellectual power had enabled him to purchase, his learning to select, and his genius to enjoy. I saw that his soul was there—that this was the room in which he had composed his noble poems, his learned histories, his beautiful illustrations of antiquity, his Essays so lively and so original—the vast mass of his miscellaneous literature—and that here he was yet meditating future works for the benefit of mankind, and for the glory of his own imperishable name.”¹

And last but not least interesting we have the boy John Ruskin's notes of his first view of the Laureate told in the childish doggerel of his *Ileriad* in 1831:

“Now hurried we home, and while taking our tea
We thought—Mr. Southey at church we might see!
Next morning, the church how we wished to be reaching!
I'm afraid 'twas as much for the poet as preaching!”²

Ruskin finds the church seats so dusty and dirty and greasy, that he notices the girls of the party can hardly sit down, for fear of their gowns, but he cannot be troubled about such trifles at such a time.

“Howe'er *I* forgave,—'deed I scarcely did know it,
For really we were 'cheek-by-jowl' with the poet!

¹ *Blackwood's Magazine*, Jan., 1819, “Letters from the Lakes.”

² Ruskin's Poems, *The Ileriad*, “Hero Worship.”

His hair was no colour at all by the way,
But half oft was black, slightly scattered with grey;
His eyes were as black as a coal, but in turning
They flashed, ay, as much as that coal does in burning!
His nose in the midst took a small outward bend,
Rather hooked like an eagle's, and sharp at the end;
But his dark lightning eye made him seem half inspired,
Or like his own Thalaba, vengefully fired.
We looked, and we gazed, and we stared in his face;
Marched out at a slow-stopping, lingering pace;
And as towards Keswick delighted we walked,
Of his face, and his form, and his features we talked."¹

Those were the good old days, before the church was restored and re-seated in 1844; the old days of pew-worship, when they who wished to be as unlike their neighbours as they could, in church as out, took care to have their own pews not only partitioned off, and doored off, but painted off also; and Southey gives us a humorous sketch of the painting of the pews in Crosthwaite Church:—"a decent white, or divine blue, or any other colour, from time to time, that taste might dictate."

Southey used to sit in a square box pew, just to the right hand side as one enters the chancel; and appeared, when he stood up, head and shoulders higher than the rest of the congregation. I have heard how he would turn his face upward and shut his eyes, and solemnly say the Creed, or continue standing in abstraction during the prayers; and how it seemed that, devoutest of the devout throughout the service, as soon as the text was given out, he put his head upon his hand, and "the subsequent proceedings interested him no more." And yet

¹ Ruskin's Poems, *The Ileriad*, "Hero Worship."

Vicar Lynn had a splendid voice, and preached, so we have heard, a better sermon than was common in those days.

The poet's head of hair, that little John Ruskin saw just grizzled, went quite white in the next ten years, for in 1837, Southey's helpmeet, out of her mind for some time past, but never, save for a few weeks at the commencement of the illness, out of his house and keeping, was taken away from him, and from that day Southey was an altered man, and aged visibly. Yet still that bushy head of hair remained with him to the last. The leaves might change their colour, they never fell.

I once heard an American saying to our sexton Joe, as he looked upon Lough's monument in the church, "Ken you tell me if *Sutthey* went to the grave with as good a suit of hair as he is here represented with?" "Ay," said Joe, "and a deal better and aw, wonderful heed of hair, neah better hereaboot than Mr. Soothey's."

But the most memorable picture of the Bard is to be found in the appendix to *Carlyle's Reminiscences*, which, as it is the latest of him, shall now be given, and that too for a definite purpose.

"It was probably in 1836 or 7, the second or third year after our removal to London, that Henry Taylor, author of *Artevelde* and various similar things, with whom I had made acquaintance, and whose early regard, constant esteem, and readiness to be helpful and friendly, should be among my memorabilia of those years, invited me to come to him one evening, and have a little speech

with Southey. . . . It was in a quiet ground floor [of his bachelor lodgings], somewhere near Downing Street, and looking into St. James' Park, that I found Taylor and Southey, with their wine before them, which they hardly seemed to be minding; very quiet this seemed to be, quiet their discourse too; to all which, not sorry at the omen, I quietly joined myself. Southey was a man towards well up in the fifties; hair grey, not yet hoary, well setting off his fine clear brown complexion; head and face both smallish, as indeed the figure was while seated; features finely cut; eyes, brow, mouth, good in their kind—expressive all, and even vehemently so, but betokening rather keenness than depth either of intellect or character; a serious, human, honest but sharp, almost fierce-looking, thin man, with very much of the militant in his aspect—in the eyes especially was visible a mixture of sorrow and of anger, or of angry contempt, as if his indignant fight with the world had not yet ended in victory, but also never should in defeat. A man you were willing to hear speak. . . . The party must have soon broken up. I recollect nothing more of it, except my astonishment when Southey at last completely rose from his chair to shake hands; he had only half risen and nodded on my coming in; and all along I had counted him a lean, little man; but now he suddenly shot aloft into a lean tall one, all legs, in shape and stature like a pair of tongs, which peculiarity my surprise doubtless exaggerated to me, but only made it the more notable and entertaining. Nothing had happened throughout that was other than moderately pleasant; and I

returned home (I conclude) well enough satisfied with my evening. Southey's sensitiveness I had noticed on the first occasion as one of his characteristic qualities; but was nothing like aware of the extent of it till our next meeting.

"This was a few evenings afterwards, Taylor giving some dinner, or party, party in honour of his guest; if dinner I was not at that, but must have undertaken for the evening sequel, as less incommodious to me, less unwholesome more especially. I remember entering, in the same house, but upstairs this time, a pleasant little drawing-room, in which, in well-lighted, secure enough condition, sat Southey in full dress, silently reclining, and as yet no other company. We saluted suitably; touched ditto on the vague initiatory points; and were still there when, by way of coming closer, I asked mildly, with no appearance of special interest, but with more than I really felt, 'Do you know De Quincey?' (the opium-eater, whom I knew to have lived in Cumberland as his neighbour.) 'Yes, sir,' said Southey with extraordinary animosity, 'and, if you have opportunity, I'll thank you to tell him he is one of the greatest scoundrels living!' I laughed lightly, said I had myself little acquaintance with the man, and could not wish to recommend myself by that message. Southey's face, as I looked at it, was become of slate colour, the eyes glancing, the attitude rigid, the figure altogether a picture of Rhadamanthine rage,—that is, rage conscious to itself of being just. He doubtless felt I would expect some explanation from him. 'I have told Hartley Coleridge,' said he, 'that he ought to take a

strong cudgel, proceed straight to Edinburgh, and give De Quincey, publicly in the streets there, a sound beating—as a calumniator, cowardly spy, traitor, base betrayer of the hospitable social hearth for one thing!’ . . . In few minutes we let the topic drop, I helping what I could, and he seemed to feel as if he had done a little wrong; and was bound to show himself more than usually amicable and social, especially with me, for the rest of the evening, which he did in effect; though I quite forget the details, only that I had a good deal of talk with him in the circle of the others; and had again, more than once, to notice the singular readiness of the blushes; amiable red blush, beautiful like a young girl’s, when you touched genially the pleasant theme; and serpent-like flash of blue or black blush (this far, very far the rarer kind, though it did recur too) when you struck upon the opposite. All details of the evening, except that primary one, are clean gone; but the effect was interesting, pleasantly stimulating and surprising. I said to myself, ‘How has this man contrived, with such a nervous system, to keep alive for near sixty years? Now blushing under his grey hairs, rosy like a maiden of fifteen; now slaty almost, like a rattlesnake or fiery serpent? How has he not been torn to pieces long since, under such furious pulling this way and that? He must have somewhere a great deal of methodic virtue in him; I suppose, too, his heart is thoroughly honest, which helps considerably!’ . . .

“I accepted him for a loyal kind of man; and was content and thankful to know of his existing in the world,

near me, or still far from me, as the fates should have determined.”¹

Carlyle saw him again, two years later, probably in 1838 or '39; found him a delighted reader of his *French Revolution*, and was proud of the poet's approbation. The once bright eyes of the Laureate were now filled with gloomy bewilderment and incurable sorrow. He was about sixty-three; his work all done, but his heart, as if broken, in full accord with Carlyle's own gloomy prognostications of the downfall of England owing to universal mammon-worship; the accelerating decay of mutual humanity, of piety and fidelity to God and man in all our relations and performance. “It cannot come to good,” said Southey, as he rose to go. “He invited me to Cumberland to see the lakes again, and added ‘Let us know beforehand, that the rites of hospitality——.’ ‘Ah, yes; thanks, thanks’”;² so the Seer parted, and Carlyle soon after heard of his death, and tells us that he felt about it as when one of the huge grinding sand-stone cylinders turning for a number of years with inconceivable velocity and shower of sparks in a great Sheffield knife-grinding factory, suddenly overcome by its own velocity long continued, and when grinding its fastest, flies off altogether and settles some yards from you, a grinding stone no longer, but a cart-load of quiet sand.

But Carlyle recognised in Southey genius, rhythmic insight and morality that shone distinguished among his contemporaries, and he adds, “I reckon him (with those blue blushes and those red) to be perhaps excitablest of

¹ *Carlyle's Reminiscences*, Vol. II., p. 312, *et seq.* ² *Idem*, p. 327.

all men ; and that a deep mute monition of conscience had spoken to him, 'You are capable of running mad if you don't take care. Acquire habitudes ; stick firm as adamant to them at all times, and work, continually work.'"¹

It was this excitability, I have little doubt, that called Southey from the exhausting work of the poet to the less exciting work of the prose writer. If Wordsworth had felt that chemistry and mechanics were needed for himself, that he might find rest from the over-exciting work of poetry, Southey too, with his swift sensitiveness, turned by divine admonishment from the great call upon feeling which the work of the poet necessitates.

It was just this want of methodism that ruined poor Coleridge. "You wear your feelings naked," Southey said to Coleridge, "I clothe mine in bearskin."

It was perhaps because Wordsworth had not the insight to perceive the absolute need for Southey to keep himself reserved and under control, that he did not take to him as much as one would have thought he would have done, in early days. For though Southey, who had had no intimacy with Wordsworth before 1803, saw him off and on for the next four years, De Quincey marked in their demeanour when they met a kind of "We are too wise to care to quarrel, and have too much admiration for one another to be such fools ; but we are not, and do not intend, to be on terms other than those of ordinary acquaintance."

In later years, when sorrow had come to both, common

¹ *Carlyle's Reminiscences*, Vol. II., p. 329.

experience and agreement on social matters and politics drew them together. Yet even in their sensibilities they were contrary in some things the one to the other. Samuel Rogers tells us:—"I spent some time with him (Southey) at Lord Lonsdale's, in company with Wordsworth and others, and while the rest of the party were walking about, talking, and amusing themselves, Southey preferred sitting *solus* in the library. 'How *cold* he is,' was the exclamation of Wordsworth, himself so joyous and communicative."¹

In their habits too there was contrariety. Southey was practical, punctilious, careful, almost to a finicking point, of his books; but Wordsworth in a library, "it's like letting a bear into a tulip bed," said Southey. Southey was neat and dapper and prim in dress; Wordsworth untidy and buttonless. One who, as a little child, with trembling fingers sewed tapes on Wordsworth's flannel vest, gave me once a most amusing account of the difference between the two men as they sat at breakfast. Here was Wordsworth the untidy, munching away and murmuring his lines between the mouthfuls, waited on hand and foot by his wife and Dorothy; one getting him his sugar for his tea, the other toasting his bread or scribbling down—her own 'poddish' as yet untasted—some verse which he had mouthed out for the benefit of futurity. And there was Southey the dapper, superintending the making of the tea, coaxing his wife to take this or that dainty morsel, stirring her tea for her, sweetening it to her taste, buttering her toast, or joking with the

¹ Rogers' *Table Talk*, p. 204.

children, and thinking of all and everyone but himself and his own as yet untasted breakfast.

These two men, so different in habit, and diverse in mind, the moody philosopher and the practical work-a-day prose writer, what could they have in common? They could have a common love for nature and for man, a common wish to help their time. Each admired the other's powers deeply. Southey writing of Wordsworth's *Excursion* and Jeffrey's scornful review of it, said—"He might as well seat himself upon Skiddaw, and fancy he had crushed the mountain."¹ And in a letter to Sir H. Taylor, under date October 1829, Southey wrote of Wordsworth—"A greater poet than Wordsworth there never has been, nor ever will be."² Whilst Wordsworth, in a note to Professor Reid a week after Southey's death, says—"Dear Southey, one of the most eminent of my contemporaries, has passed away."

But the end of the Greta Hall days are drawing to a close. After three years of gradual loss of mental powers, when indeed his "days among the dead were passed," for though he walked round his library and pathetically took down his books, he only patted them as familiar friends with whom he could no longer "commune day by day," and put them silently back again, Southey on March 21, 1843, died. And what was it but love and affectionate regard for the noble motive of the man, that brought Wordsworth, then in his seventy-fourth year, across the hills on a dark and stormy March morning,

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. II., p. 97.

² *Idem*. Vol. VI., p. 76.

to be one of the two strangers present when they laid the Laureate to rest in the north side of the tower of Crosthwaite Church,—a place selected by Southey that he might thus break down the old superstitious ideas that looked on northern sides of churches as fit burial ground only for the outcast and the wicked.

There was one other stranger that stood arm in arm with the grey-haired, venerable Wordsworth on this day, in the wind and rain ; it was his son-in-law, the poet Quillinan ; two singers by the grave of a third. Nay, there were four singers, for as Quillinan wrote of that sorrowful occasion of Southey's funeral :

“Where a hedge of black-thorn blooms,
Close beside the place of tombs,
As the bearers bear the dead,
Pacing slow with solemn tread ;
Two feathered choristers of Spring,
To the dark procession sing,
Heedless of the driving rain,
Fearless of the mourning train,
Perched upon a trembling stem,
They sing the poet's requiem.
Some sacred frenzy has possess'd
These warblers of the russet breast,
To honour thus, with friendship brave,
A poet's passage to his grave.”

So the robins,¹ the brave birds of good St. Kentigern, did honour to him, who, as he walked through the Howrahs by Doctor-dub to the Church, and back by the main road to Greta Hall, had given back to the valley the wish to remember the patron saint, and had

¹ Cf. *Introduction to Southey's Colloquies*, Vol. I., pp. 303-333.

wiped out the reproach of our forgetfulness of him who, in A.D. 553, planted the cross in the Thwaite, and "sought to strengthen and confirm in the faith the men who dwelt there."

On the east end of the altar tomb in the Crosthwaite Church whereon the Laureate, book in hand, lies in his marble sleep, may be read his epitaph. And if one had any doubt of the affection and deep regard that Wordsworth had for him who wore the laurel that was so soon to deck his own grey head, this would be removed by turning to the correspondence, as touching this epitaph, that passed between the present Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's father and the Rydal Bard, in September of that same year, 1843, in which Southey died. The committee of those who raised the fund for that effigy—the truest likeness of his father he knew, so Cuthbert Southey once told me—had asked Wordsworth to write the epitaph. And not without some heart-searching, he undertook the task. Vigorous in body as he was still, the art of composition, never easy to him, had become irksome, and the poet was so keenly sensible of the duty imposed upon him to write well and truly of his dead friend, that he was painfully careful of the work.

And very interesting is it to note that the epitaph beginning by being in sixteen lines, grew into eighteen, because Wordsworth remembers Southey's love of Cat-Ghyll, of Lodore, and the fact that from his house he looked on Bassenthwaite as on Derwentwater. So to the original draft :

“Ye vales and hills whose beauty hither drew
The poet’s steps, and fixed him here, on you
His eyes have closed !”¹

Wordsworth added :

“Ye torrents foaming down the rocky steeps,
Ye lakes wherein the spirit of water sleeps.”²

And again these eighteen lines became twenty, for Wordsworth remembered that Southey’s prose writings were as memorable as anything he had written in verse, and that history was his subject, and his wish to help his country the motive of his labours ; and so he added these lines :

“Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State’s guidance, or the Church’s weal.”³

But the care of the old poet comes out best in his wish to offend no canon of taste by over-strung metaphor in his lines. Thus he halted long between the opinions whether he should write :

“Wide were his aims, yet in no human breast
Could private feelings meet for holier rest,”⁴

or

“Could private feelings find a holier nest.”⁵

The latter metaphor seemed to him, he said, “somewhat bold and rather startling for marble, particularly in a church.” But Justice Coleridge was a bold man and loved strong metaphors, and so it reads “a holier nest” to-day.

¹ *Wordsworth’s Poetical Works*, Knight’s edition, Vol. VIII., p. 141.

² *Idem*, p. 143. ³ *Idem*, p. 141. ⁴ *Idem*, p. 142. ⁵ *Idem*, p. 144.

But the last two lines were a great difficulty :

“ He to Heaven was vowed
Through a long life ; and calmed by Christian faith
In his pure soul, the fear of change and death.”¹

Thus they stood in the first draft. Then the poet wrote :

“ He to Heaven was vowed
Through a life long and pure, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.”²

Next he meditated writing :

“Through his *industrious* life, and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.”³

And in what seems to have been a final draft, which appears in Cuthbert Southey's *Life of his Father*, one finds that the last couplet runs :

“Through a life long and pure, and *steadfast* faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.”

Which of the last three versions were chosen for the sculptor's chisel we know not ; for after the epitaph had been carved on the tomb, the graver was ordered to erase it and to return to the *original* draft.

“Through a life long and pure ; and Christian faith
Calmed in his soul the fear of change and death.”⁴

Whoever stoops to notice this erasure will feel how carefully the Rydal poet performed his task. And only those who knew what the Library at Greta Hall had

¹ *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*, Knight's edition, Vol. VIII., p. 142.

² *Idem*, p. 143.

³ *Idem*, p. 142.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 143.

been to the Laureate, even after the time when his reason had gone wrong, could have penned the lines:

“And ye, loved books, no more
Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne’er shall forfeit their renown
Adding immortal labours of his own.”

The epitaph was evidently appreciated by contemporaries. Edward Quillinan in a letter to Crabbe Robinson, under date December 9, 1843, wrote thus:—

“I have,” says he, “been dining at Rydal, after walking about a considerable part of the morning, through the waters and the mists, with the Bard, who seems to defy all weathers, and who called this ‘a beautiful; soft, solemn day,’ and so it was, though somewhat insidiously soft, for a mackintosh was hardly proof against its insinuations. He is in great force, and in great vigour of mind. He has just completed an epitaph on Southey, written at the request of a committee at Keswick, for Crosthwaite Church. I think it will please you.”²

Let us leave this monument, not only of a poet, but of the enthusiasm for his art of the young Northumbrian self-taught sculptor Lough. Let us leave the church of good St. Kentigern itself, and passing out, stand a moment over the square slate table-tomb, whereunder lies the dust of the poet mingling with the ashes of his wife and children and faithful household servant, and as

¹ *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*, Knight's edition, Vol. VIII., p. 141.

² *Henry Crabbe Robinson's Diary*, ed. by Dr. Sadler, Vol. III., p. 234.

we bend in grateful thought above it, let us be comforted by the words of Walter Savage Landor :

“ No firmer breast than thine hath Heaven
To poet, sage, or hero given :
No heart more tender, none more just
To that He largely placed in trust :
Therefore shalt thou, whatever date
Of years be thine, with soul elate
Rise up before the eternal throne,
And hear in God’s own voice, ‘ Well done.’ ”¹

¹ W. S. Landor’s Poems—*To Southey*.

CHAPTER IV

APPLETHWAITE : WINDY BROW : CHESTNUT HILL

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT AND WORDSWORTH : WORDSWORTH AND
DR. LIETCH : WILLIAM CALVERT : CALVERT AND SHELLEY :
THE SHELLEYS AT CHESTNUT HILL.

LET us now go across the fields from Greta Hall towards Skiddaw by Vicarage Hill and the rifle butts, and so by Ormrthwaite—the “clearing of Ormr,” son of Ketel the Dane—to Applethwaite. That little clearing of the water pool under Skiddaw,” as “Ea-pul-thwaite” or Applethwaite may mean, was probably the place that determined the site of the great fortified camp, whose lines of earthwork and rampart, as I believe, may still be seen in the dell running parallel with the stream that falls toward the hamlet, and whose name is retained for us by the word Underscar, the *Caer* or fortified camp of “Hundr” the Viking.

As we pass through that beautiful yew-shaded hamlet towards the British hill, we see a rough-built mill upon our left, long since disused. That mill prevented Words-

worth from carrying out the intention of his benefactor, Sir George Beaumont, viz., the building of a "seemly cottage" in what was at that time "a sunny dell," though now the trees have cast it into shade.

Calvert had tried to get Wordsworth to leave Dove Cottage at Town End, that he might join Coleridge and himself, "a man who had inventions rare," at Windy Brow, and he had failed. Sir George Beaumont would try his luck; and so in 1803, when he knows that the arrival of the firstborn on the 18th of June will have probably made Wordsworth feel already that Dove Cottage is too circumscribed for the use of a family man, he buys and presents to the Poet this plot of ground in Applethwaite. He has probably heard how both Wordsworth and Coleridge feel the long miles between Keswick and Grasmere too long for their friendship's sweet content.

Perhaps, also, he has heard from Wordsworth, as Walter Scott has heard, what pleasure Wordsworth has had in making Southey's better acquaintance in his late visit to Keswick. "I had the pleasure of seeing Coleridge and Southey at Keswick last Sunday. Southey, whom I never saw much of before, I liked much."¹

Be that as it may, a portion of the sweetest dell in Skiddaw's breast is for sale, and Wordsworth has the chance of becoming a resident beneath his native Cumbria's grandest hill.

"Beaumont! it was thy wish that I should rear
A seemly cottage in this sunny dell,

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 366.

On favoured ground, thy gift, where I might dwell
 In neighbourhood with One to me most dear,
 That undivided we from year to year
 Might work in our high Calling—a bright hope
 To which our fancies, mingling, gave free scope
 Till checked by some necessities severe.”¹

So spoke Wordsworth in sonnet form in 1804. The “necessities severe” were the waywardness of poor Coleridge, his irresolution to rid himself of the opium fiend, and the hypochondria that drove him from England in search of new health and new will, in 1804. “The necessities”—as Wordsworth put it—“of his domestic situation.”² Then the mill rose up and drove the Muses thence. Wordsworth gave Sir G. Beaumont’s gift to his daughter, Dora, when she was “a frail feeble monthling,” and all idea of housebuilding passed out of the poet’s head; when Dr. Lietch, a true lover of Nature and of Wordsworth’s interpretation of it, much sorrowing, for he was sorely stricken, finding in the quiet dell at Applethwaite the balm that such sweet beauty of sight and sound can bring to wounded mortality, and hearing that he could procure a little piece of ground, in the middle of the poet’s plots, wrote to tell him of his wish to build a cottage there. He offered to purchase the intermediate strip, at the same time expressing his wish not to interfere with any plan that Wordsworth might have of building a cottage there.

The letters are so honourable to the memory of Dr. Lietch’s generosity, and Wordsworth’s replies are so

¹ *At Applethwaite*, near Keswick, p. 212.

² See note to Sonnet, *At Applethwaite*, p. 212.

characteristic and contain a little bit of such interesting local history, that I venture to transcribe them. The first is a letter to Dr. Lietch's nephew, a lawyer, about the projected plan of building at Applethwaite Ghyll.

"The Howe, Keswick, Sept. /48.

"Dear Tom,—We have bought a landed estate of about 12 or 1300 yards square, and wish to have a touch of your art in conveying the same. I believe you will find some very curious and ancient tenure and customs of this estate—which consists of two small plots on the skirts of Skiddaw adjudged to two poor men as their share of common right, when the old mountain was enclosed and began to belong as much as a mountain can, to a man.

"The father of one of the old fellows was the first man employed in making the first road for wheeled vehicles to travel over, in this valley, everything previously, coping stones and all, being conveyed on pack-horses from more civilised lands.

"The purchase money is £50, and I suppose it will be necessary to have the title looked into. I have put off, till you came, finishing the purchase, having meantime given the luck penny, after the fashion of these parts. So that now they cannot turn us out of the valley; and some of the kindred will perhaps build up a little cottage in one of the loveliest scenes in all this beautiful land.

"A field and a wooded glen belonging to the poet Wordsworth lies on each side of this little plot of ours,

and Wordsworth thirty or thirty-five years ago planted a yew, and planned a cottage for himself in this sequestered glen. He will never build one there now, but I have written to ask him if he wishes to do so, for, if so, he will not perhaps like anyone to sit down between his fields, and in that case our cottage once more vanishes, for the old poet, to whom we all owe so much, must not be displeased.—Dear Tom, Yours faithfully,

D. LIETCH.

“To Thomas Lietch, Solicitor, North Shields.”

Wordsworth's reply to Dr. Lietch's enquiry as to his willingness to sell, ran as follows :

“Dear Sir,—I am sorry that I cannot meet your wishes in respect to parting with any portion of my little property at Applethwaite ; it is endeared to me by so many sacred and personal recollections, some of very long standing, that I much regretted the erection of that small mill when it took place, and had I known of the intention the fulfilment of which impaired so much the privacy of the Place, I should have done my utmost by purchase or otherwise to have prevented such an intrusion.

“Circumstances frustrated my original intention of building at Applethwaite, and at my advanced age I am not likely to do so, but that may not be the case with some of my family.

“If your intention was to fix the site of your cottage upon the ground bounded on both sides by my property, I certainly should feel much obliged by your selecting

some other spot, and one which might interfere as little as possible with the prospect and character of the Dell.

“Believe me, dear Sir, to be sensible of the kind expressions you use towards me and sincerely yours,—

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

“Rydal Mount, Sept. 18 /48.”

“To William Wordsworth, Esq. (from Dr. Lietch), Sept., 1848.

“Dear Sir,—After the expression of your wishes respecting the dell at Applethwaite, it is impossible for me to entertain the idea of building a cottage there. I would have purchased the piece of ground some time ago, but from unwillingness to intrude upon the question contained in my last note—and only bought it a few days ago on being informed that you had abandoned all intentions of building upon it.

“Though a very hampered patch as the site of a cottage, yet as there is no possibility of procuring a spot whence the view, so glorious in itself and so interesting to me, for the reason before alluded to, could be commanded, I had made up my mind to be content with the narrow space, and had arranged to get the little field behind, whence the whole of the magnificent scene opens upon the eye. The owners had accepted my offer of £50 for these two small allotments, and Wilson Clarke (of Gale Cottage) would have wanted but a small sum for the field above, provided he could induce the old woman who holds it for her life to transfer it to me. I mention this solely that you may, if you think proper, secure yourself

from all chance of future intrusion, and not as conveying any wish that you would relieve me of my purchase, on account of its being now of no use to me. The men were by no means anxious to dispose of their little property, and if I do not keep it, I daresay will take it again on very easy terms—so that I hope you will not consider me at all in the matter. I shall however retain my right to the ground until you express your wishes. It is impossible not to speak with open heart and tongue to one whose thoughts have been through life more familiar companions than those of one's personal friends, and it is this which leads me on to say that the reason I so much desired to obtain a resting-place, however small and humble, in that dell was, that many a time I have carried into it a heart, weary both with bodily pain and the burden of this unintelligible world; and have felt it soothed and relieved by the gentle spirits of the beautiful place; sometimes by the grandeur and the beauty of the scene, sometimes by the mingled sounds of the church bells and the running brook which blend there, perhaps more musically than anywhere else in the whole valley.

“I never had the happiness of seeing you in my life, but in fancy I have often seen you in this dell, with the friends who, in early life, often accompanied you there; those great spirits to whom I also owe so much. The idea, that among the numbers who have no doubt sought this sweet little seclusion for its beauty, there was one who had often sought it in depression, and left it in tranquillity, and who loved it the more thoroughly for your sake, will not, I hope, lessen the attachment you have so long and

so justly felt for it.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir,
yours very respectfully,

D. LIETCH.”

To this letter, which so pathetically describes the peculiar beauty of Applethwaite Glen, Wordsworth rejoined :

“ My dear Sir,—I trust you have attributed my tardiness in replying to your very gratifying and obliging letter received (I am sorry to say, a fortnight ago) in some measure to its right cause, viz., its reaching me at a time when the distressing circumstance of my daughter-in-law’s somewhat sudden death in a foreign country gave a great shock to the family. Moreover, I thought an opportunity was at hand for me to have a personal interview with you.

“ It would be less difficult and painful to my feelings to express by *words* than by writing, the reasons for my non-compliance with your wishes.

“ At present I need only say that my original acquisition of, and subsequent appropriation and long-continued possession of, that little property are accompanied with a *sacred* feeling which puts it out of my power to make any change which I can avoid ; and I can only say that I exceedingly regret standing in the way of wishes with which I sincerely sympathise.

“ I am much obliged by your offer to transfer your purchase, and shall readily accept it if it meets with the approbation of my younger son-in-law, who has, during his life, an interest in the property.

“ Let me add that I have some hope of being able ere long to go over to Keswick myself, in which case I hope

to have an interview with you.—Believe me, my dear Sir,
to remain with great respect, sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

“Rydal Mount, 10th Oct., 1848.”

Dr. Lietch forwent his pleasure, and Wordsworth became proprietor of the adjacent fields. He built “a seemly cottage” soon after, as the date upon the door-head tells us, and we may to-day, by leave of the kind inhabitant, read on a brass plate within, a copy of that sonnet to Sir G. Beaumont which the gift called forth.

Let us leave Applethwaite after a gaze from Southey’s favourite vantage ground upon the terrace-road, a little to the north of where the beck flows down to the old disused mill; there we may in fancy find the three artists, Glover, Nash, and Westall, as Southey once found them, all hard at work; and then let us go by Ormrthwaite, and strike across the meadow under the “Ridge of the Dead,” the high uplifted burial place of the Norsemen forefathers of old, their Hlad-rigg, the Latrigg of our time, till we reach Spooney Green Lane; thence crossing the Lane, let us go by Windy Brow farm to Greta Bank.

Latrigg above us is for ever connected with the one-time owner of Windy Brow—Mr. William Calvert of Greta Bank—“a Cumberland squire very popular in his day,” as Mrs. Howard of Greystoke wrote in her journal. For this was the Calvert who in 1814, when corn was at famine prices, got leave to enclose the old Norse burial place on the height, with its seventy cist-vaen remains, and making a good road for his plough team from base to summit, put the play-ground of the people—that so

they might eat bread, as well as play pace-eggs—under tith, with the double result of proving that corn cannot ripen in Cumberland at 1200 feet above sea level, and that the cost of such undertaking, no matter how public spirited, means ruination to the private purse of the experimenting agriculturist.

This William Calvert, Professor Dowden thinks, was in Wordsworth's mind, when the latter wrote the last 5th, 6th, and 7th verses of his *Stanzas in Thomson's Castle of Indolence*. He was certainly a "noticeable man with large grey eyes"; but those who have seen the delicate pencil drawing, which still exists, of his striking face and head and curly locks, know that his lips were beautifully shaped, and that it was impossible for any poet who had ever seen him to describe him thus :

" Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy ;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe ;"¹

and though he had "inventions rare," a water clock, an instrument for measuring heights of hills by angle, and the like, and though he was so keen a chemist that he was willing to lay out any reasonable sum of money necessary for the setting up of a laboratory at Windy Brow in 1801, we must go to another poet for a true description of William Calvert.

It is not in Wordsworth's verse that we shall find so good an account of him as in Shelley's letter after his

¹ *Stanzas written in my pocket copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence*, p. 182.

visit to the Duke of Norfolk at Greystoke Castle in the beginning of December, 1811.

“‘We met several people at the Duke’s,’” wrote Shelley to a friend. ‘One in particular struck me. He was an elderly man, who seemed to know all my concerns, and the expression of his face, whenever I held the argument, which I do everywhere, was such as I shall not readily forget. I shall have more to tell of him, for we have met him before in these mountains, and his peculiar look struck (me and) Harriet.’”¹

But here at Windy Brow or Greta Bank we think of others than Shelley as guests. Hither came Wordsworth, much perplexed as to his future, and his sister Dorothy, in the September of 1794, to be guests of William Calvert, owner of the old farm-house, so soon to be dismantled;—the family house of the Calverts, since the Elizabethan days of the German settlers who came to work the copper ore in the valleys.

William Calvert and Dorothy Wordsworth are to-day listening sadly enough to the voice of the “Loud Lamerter” that flows below the house—louder in those days, for that then its channel had not been cleared, for purposes of building, of its immense stones, which by their concussion in high floods produced, as the poet tells us, the loud and awful noises he described in his sonnet:

“Greta, what fearful listening! when huge stones
Rumble along thy bed, block after block;
Or, whirling with reiterated shock,
Combat, while darkness aggravates the groans;”—²

¹ MacCarthy's *Early Life of Shelley*, p. 123.

² *To the River Greta*, p. 712.

for Raisley Calvert, brother of William, the young Cambridge undergraduate, who has tired of the frivolity of University life,¹ is down here sick unto death, smitten

¹ The following letter written by Raisley Calvert to his brother William throws light upon his character:—

“Dear Brother,—I think it proper to acquaint you that I left Cambridge soon after my arrival there. The reasons for my acting thus I shall state as briefly as possible.

“1st. That I will never enter into the profession for which I was intended, enormous expense attending a student’s life at Cambridge, which (to preserve any kind of respectability) will be much greater than my income will allow of. I can in every respect live much more to my satisfaction in London (which is none of the cheapest places in the kingdom) at about half the expense as in Cambridge.

“My tutor will have a bill against me of about 12 pounds from the time I was entered till the end of my stay here which was not above a week. . . .

“I know of no satisfaction or enjoyment you can have at Cambridge for the money Custom calls upon you to throw away there, except you deem Drunkenness, and worse, such. You may perhaps at first view suppose my words are link’d with exaggeration or chimera, but there is a young man at Cambridge, with whom I was acquainted and to whom I thought myself in every respect equal (and he was thought to be an Economist), yet he could not live for less than 160 pounds per annum.

“But you may say that I might have improved myself wonderfully in Classics, Mathematics; so I might. But I never met with any person who is willing to allow the utility of Classics in the social intercourse of life.

“The utility of Mathematics is, I confess, a little more obvious, but either to distinguish myself or gain any emolument at the University by this study will require such intense application as to weaken extremely your constitution.

“I set out I believe to-morrow for Brabant by way of Dover, and as it is very likely I shall stay some time on the Continent I particularly desire you to deposit a sum of money in the hands of Messrs. Ransom & Co. . . .

“—I am, your affectionate Brother,

R. CALVERT.”

with decline. Or Wordsworth perhaps is in conversation with Calvert before writing to Matthews for his opinion as to the possibility of getting a post in the London press, for he is at his wits' end to know how, since he has refused to take orders, or sit on an attorney's stool, he is to earn bread for his own and his sister's needs, and be enabled to pursue the vocation of poet which he feels Heaven has designed for him.

And what if Raisley of the pale face and hectic flush was listener in those anxious days of friends in council at Windy Brow, and has in confidence told Wordsworth, that at his death he intends to leave money that shall help him? So that when William Calvert joins his regiment at Tynemouth Barracks, Wordsworth writing from Windy Brow, under date of Oct. 1, 1794, will be able to say as follows:

"Dear Calvert,—I returned to Keswick last Sunday, having been detained in Lancashire much longer than I expected.

"I found your brother worse than when I left Keswick, but a good deal better than he had been some weeks before.

"He is determined to set off for Lisbon, but any person in his state of health must recoil from the idea of going so far alone, particularly into a country of whose language he is ignorant. I have reflected upon this myself, and have been induced to speak with him about the possibility of your giving him as much pecuniary assistance as would enable me to accompany him thither, and stay with him till his health is re-established. I could then

return and leave him there. This, I think, if possible, you ought to do; you see I speak to you as a friend, but then perhaps your present expenses may render it difficult. Would it not exalt you in your own esteem to retrench a little for so excellent a purpose?

“Reflecting that his return is uncertain, your brother requests me to inform you that he has drawn out his will, which he meant to get executed in London.

“The purport of this Will is to leave you all his property, real and personal, chargeable with a legacy of six hundred pounds to me, in case that on enquiry into the state of our affairs in London he should think it advisable so to do.

“It is at my request that this information is communicated to you, and I have no doubt but that you will do both him and self the justice to hear this mark of his approbation of me without your good opinion of either of us being at all diminished by it. If you could come over yourself it would be much the best; at all events fail not to write by return of post, as the sooner your brother gets off the better. He will depart immediately after hearing from you.—I am, dear Calvert, your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

“To Ensign Calvert,

Tynemouth Barracks, Northumberland.”

I am enabled to quote this memorable letter by the kindness of a friend in whose possession it is. Memorable because it contains the first information of the generous intent of a dying young man who thereby gave

us Wordsworth's work and art. "I should have been," says Wordsworth, "forced by necessity into one of the professions, had not a friend left me £900. This bequest was from a young man with whom, though I call him friend, I had but little connexion; and the act was done entirely from a confidence on his part that I had power and attainments which might be of use to mankind."¹

And very sure it is that on the temples of the dying man at Windy Brow is set a wreath of gratitude no winds of time shall cause to wither or to fall. As long as Wordsworth is read, will also be read that memorial sonnet to his grateful friend:

"Calvert! it must not be unheard by them
 Who may respect my name, that I to thee
 Owed many years of early liberty.
 This care was thine when sickness did condemn
 Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
 That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
 Where'er I liked; and finally array
 My temples with the Muse's diadem.
 Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
 If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
 In my past verse; or shall be in the lays
 Of higher mood, which now I meditate—
 It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
 To think how much of this will be thy praise."²

Above the sonnet Wordsworth wrote the note, "This young man, Raisley Calvert, to whom I was so much indebted, died at Penrith, 1795."

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 98.

² *To the Memory of Raisley Calvert*, p. 356.

It is no small honour to Cumberland that on the banks of the Greta and Derwent dwelt the families of men, who were able to foresee and aid, by timely help, the literary genius of the Lakes at the beginning of this century. What Wedgwood, whose forefathers sprung from Broughton, did for Coleridge, that Calvert did for Wordsworth. Nor was Wordsworth the only poet that found welcome and help at Windy Brow. Thither, in 1800, came Coleridge, seeking for a home; and there, when he entered the valley in 1803, was Southey made at once a welcome guest. There, too, somewhere close on Christmas Day, 1811, did Calvert invite the elder bard of Greta Hall to meet the young runaway boy-poet Shelley, to whom he had showed no small kindness. "We first," wrote Shelley, "met Southey at this Calvert's house."

And now let us leave Windy Brow with its memories of great political cracks between Lord Lonsdale and Sir Gilfrid Lawson, Calvert, Southey, and Brougham, and long scientific discourses suggested by Humphrey Davy's letter, and the latest invention Calvert had in mind; leave the walk in that sonorous amphitheatre of wood above the river, where Dorothy helped to pile the stones into a seat for all who loved "to muse on flood and fell." As we go across the stone bridge to Brigham, let us remember that the love of electricity and electrical machine that Calvert bequeathed to Windy Brow in 1800, has borne fruit in 1890, and that Greta Bank, in common with the town of Keswick, is at this day lighted with the marvellous force stolen from the river Greta up yonder at the Forge.

Let us turn to the left, and so along the Penrith Road up the Brow by the brewery to Chestnut Hill. We are bent on visiting the one-time honeymoon haunt of Shelley. So up the Ambleside Road we go, till we reach, beyond the first cottage and a barn on our right hand, a long range of building that with treble roof-tree runs upward step on step. A side postern gate gives us a peep into a "lovely orchard garden"—once how different—where Shelley and his young girl-wife, and Eliza Westbrook disported themselves.

The roof gathers moss, for a sycamore shades it on the garden side, and on the roadway side a beech and elm and wild cherry tree overhang it. At the far end, a dark Scotch fir stands up to take command. Enter the garden and you will find a room with bow-window, and steps that lead thereto; a little room all clad outside in slate-mail. That was Shelley's drawing-room and study; beyond it, is the tiny bed-room the poet occupied. The house, when Shelley was hereabout, ended short off there; the more important looking part beyond is a later addition, as also is the little belfry now falling into decay at the Shelley end of the house, which was added by an occupier in the middle of the century.

The garden is altered to-day: Shelley had the run of the whole long patch; a fence forbids that now; a garden wall and hedge of evergreen cut off the view from the paddock, where originally a simple rail fence stood. The old Dutch garden once so trim and neat,

and filled with cheer of flower and herbs, has been overrun with gigantic rhododendron bushes that convert it to a wilderness. But still the hepatica blossoms first here in spring just as Shelley saw it, and the snowdrop, and crocus, and yellow Cambrian poppy, tell us the Love-time has come, as they told it to the poet.

This is Chestnut Hill. Gideon Dare, as fine a specimen of our Northern yeomen as could be, judging by his portrait, used to own this property. He lived in the little cottage at the further end, and he rests now in the Crosthwaite Churchyard a few paces from the main entrance, with the date of July 21, 1849, upon his beautifully carved tombstone.

The remarkable looking youth of nineteen, the young collegian who had been expelled from Oxford for his tract, *The Necessity of Atheism*, had, in the first week of September, 1811, married Harriet Westbrook, the daughter of a coffee-house keeper in London, a child of sixteen summers. Shelley suddenly appeared at Keswick in the beginning of October, with his sister-in-law Eliza, in search of a "sequestered place which," as De Quincey tells us, "it *was*, for eight months in the year," and also of a cheap place, "which it was *not*,"¹ and took lodgings at Daniel Crosthwaite's of Townhead. Except for Calvert of Windy Brow and the Duke of Norfolk, an old friend of Shelley's family, the pair were as friendless, as they were nigh penniless. Wordsworth was at Grasmere, but did not come over the Raise.

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Masson, Vol. XI., p. 368.

Wilson of Elleray was busy with his revision of his *Island of Palms*; De Quincey at Grasmere regretted afterwards that he did not at this period avail himself of the opportunity of "showing any little attention in my power to a brother Oxonian, and to a man of letters,"¹ and added, "My own library, which being rich in the wickedest of German speculations, would have been more to Shelley's taste than the Spanish library of Southey."²

Coleridge, too, was in London, and this he appears to have considered a misfortune for Shelley. "I might have been of use to him, which Southey could not, for I should have sympathised with his poetics; metaphysical reviews and the very word metaphysics is an abomination to Southey, and Shelley would have felt that I understood them."

All that was known of Shelley's existence in the valley was that a young man, very like Southey in face, a sort of second edition, who was a writer, but "ratherly—what queer i' his wayeses," who, for example, did not go to church on Sunday, and made flames at nights "in bottles and what not" in the garden, was staying at Chestnut Hill.

"The scenery here is awfully beautiful," so wrote Shelley on November 14, ". . . but the object most interesting to my feelings is Southey's habitation. He is now on a journey, when he returns I will call upon him."³

Shelley was wrongly informed, Southey had come back

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, Vol. XI., p. 369.

² *Idem*, p. 370.

³ *Life of P. B. Shelley*, by E. Dowden, LL.D., Vol. I., p. 210.

from his twelve weeks' jaunt in the early part of September.

Again on November 23, 1811: "I have taken," he writes to Miss Hitchener, with whom the young bridegroom perhaps hardly knew he was really in love, "a long *solitary* ramble to-day." (I suspect that ramble was up by Rakefoot, and along Walla Crag to Lodore, by the old packhorse road to Borrowdale.) "These gigantic mountains piled on each other, these waterfalls, these million-shaped clouds tinted by varying colours of innumerable rainbows hanging between yourself and a lake as smooth and dark as a plain of polished jet—oh, these are sights attunable to the contemplation! . . . I have been thinking of you and of human nature. Your letter has been the partner of my solitude—or, rather, I have not been alone, for you have been with me."¹

Then came a slight snow-fall, and in December he writes: "These mountains are now capped with snow. The lake, as I see it hence, is glassy and calm. Snow-vapours, tinted by the loveliest colours of refraction, pass far below the summits of these giant rocks. The scene, even in a winter's sunset, is inexpressively lovely. What will it be in summer?"²

In the interval of these two last letters, Shelley had visited at Greystoke. "We are now so poor," wrote Shelley to Medwin on November 30, 1811, "as to be actually in danger of every day being deprived of the necessities of life, . . . and it is nearly with our very

¹ *Life of P. B. Shelley*, by E. Dowden, LL.D., Vol. I., p. 197.

² *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 197.

last guinea that we visit the Duke of Norfolk at Greystoke to-morrow. I have very few hopes from this visit.”¹

Shelley was right; the Duke, moved by compassion, did intercede with his old friend, Shelley’s grandfather, alas! without result.

At Greystoke Shelley met Calvert, and was therefore in a fair way to make Southey’s acquaintance. Though shocked by Shelley’s views, Calvert was determined to befriend the young “revolutionist.” He interceded with Gideon Dare, the estateman who probably did not much wish to be “boddered” with “sic like,” and had asked Shelley the rather exorbitant rent of two guineas and a half. The result of the intercession Shelley tells us:

“The rent of our cottage was two guineas and a half a week, with linen provided; he has made the proprietor lower it one guinea, and has lent us linen himself.”²

Calvert did more than lend them this linen, he lent them advice. He procured for the young boy-reformer and his child-wife the acquaintance and interest of Southey. The Shelleys had hardly been a week of the new year, 1812, at Chestnut Hill, when the Southeys called; and to the question from one of the ladies, if Gideon Dare had let them the garden also with *their* part of the house, “Oh no,” replied Mrs. Shelley, “the garden is not ours; but then, you know, the people let us run about in it whenever Percy and I are tired of sitting in the house.”³

¹ *Life of P. B. Shelley*, by E. Dowden, LL.D., Vol. I., p. 202.

² *Idem*, see note in Vol. I., p. 195.

³ *De Quincey’s Works, Shelley*, Vol. VI., p. 18.

Poor child ! one can hardly look upon the few trim little beds that remain at Chestnut Hill, with their quaint, old fashioned box-edgings and their tiny paths, without a sigh, to think how soon that playful child-life became such sorrow and bitterness.

Shelley was soon a guest at Greta Hall. Southey, hard at work upon his life of Nelson, which had been long laid by, would doubtless put it all aside, push manuscript from him, and rise with all courtliness to welcome the poet-preacher of Atheism, and Reform, and Irish Emancipation, to a long talk in his great drawing-room study.

But fire and water cannot mingle ; and though at first sight Southey charmed young Shelley, so that Shelley could speak of him as "a great man," he soon found that they had little or nothing in common.

"I have also been much engaged in talking with Southey," wrote Shelley to Miss Hitchener on December 26, 1811. "You may conjecture that a man must possess high and estimable qualities if, with the prejudices of such total differences from my sentiments, I can regard him great and worthy. In fact, Southey is an advocate of liberty and equality."¹

But Southey was an advocate for existing establishments, and—worse than all—a bitter pill indeed for one who had prefaced a poem to aid an Irish patriot in prison a year before with a quotation from the *Curse of Kehama*, Shelley found him as he told the Sussex schoolmistress in this same letter, decidedly "anti-Hibernian." "Southey hates the Irish ; he speaks against

¹ *Life of Shelley*, by Dowden, Vol. I., p. 212.

Catholic Emancipation. In all these things we differ ; our differences were the subject of a long conversation.”¹

From that day the idol of Greta Hall had fallen. Lucky for the worshipper that he was able so soon to put another in its place, as he did by the sudden discovery that the author of *Political Justice*, Godwin, the great lawgiver and prophet who was to bring in the golden age, was still alive. Godwin, the foreteller of the time when every man was to be a moral hero, and a logical machine so framed as to forward the general good with unfailing persistence and punctuality and precision, when all property was to be held of right by those who could best use it for the public good, was still walking this planet. Godwin should be Shelley's idol in place of that effete and worn-out sham and superstition which he had found Southey to be.

Writing to Godwin on Jan. 16, 1812, to tell him of his determination to go over to Ireland and preach and pamphleteer Catholic Emancipation, Shelley says, “Southey, the poet whose principles were pure and elevated once, is now the paid champion of every abuse and absurdity. I have had much conversation with him. He says ‘you will think as I do when you are as old.’”

Let us see what impression Shelley made upon the poet at Greta Hall. “Here is a man at Keswick,”² writes Southey to his friend Bedford, under date Jan. 4, 1812, “who acts upon me as my own ghost would do. He is just what I was in 1794. His name is Shelley,

¹ MacCarthy, *Shelley's Early Life*, p. 129. ² *Idem*, p. 131.

son to the member for Shoreham; with £6000 a year entailed upon him, and as much more in his father's power to cut off. Beginning with romances of ghosts and murder, and with poetry at Eton, he passed at Oxford, into metaphysics; printed half a dozen pages, which he entitled 'The Necessity of Atheism'; sent one anonymously to Coplestone, in expectation, I suppose, of converting him; was expelled in consequence; married a girl of seventeen, after being turned out of doors by his father; and here they both are, in lodgings, living upon £200 a year which her father allows them. He is come to the fittest physician in the world. At present he has got to the Pantheistic stage of philosophy, and, in the course of a week, I expect he will be a Berkeleyan, for I have put him upon a course of Berkeley. It has surprised him a good deal to meet, for the first time in his life, with a man who perfectly understands him, and does him full justice. I tell him that all the difference between us is that he is nineteen, and I am thirty-seven, and I dare say it will not be very long before I shall succeed in convincing him that he may be a true philosopher, and do a great deal of good with £6000 a year; the thought of which troubles him a great deal more at present than ever the want of sixpence (for I have known such a want) did me. . . . God help us! the world wants mending, though he did not set about it exactly in the right way. God bless you Grosvenor!

R. S."¹

The Berkeley medicine prescribed by Dr. Southey was

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. III., p. 325.

procured by carrier and post from Lloyd of Brathay; but it was not taken till some months after at Lynmouth, and then only made the taker sick of the whole philosophic school that thus attempted "to cover up their ignorance by proud invention of foolish words."

But meanwhile Shelley worked away hard at his appointed task, up at the little cottage under the beech and sycamore on Chestnut Hill. The *Irish Tract on Catholic Emancipation* was written. His one hundred and fifty essays were completed. A sheaf of short poems for publication in Ireland, the motive of which he described under the motto, "I sing, and Liberty may love my song!" and a novel called *Hubert Cauvin*, designed to set forth the causes of the failure of the French Revolution,—these were the products of a pen that worked till the brain reeled, and resort was had to that most disastrous of all medicines, laudanum.

But Keswick heard that the Duke of Norfolk had had the young poet over at Greystoke, and I expect that Keswick at once called to pay its respects. This probably broke in upon Shelley's time and tried his patience. He got to hate Keswick. Then there was an accident on the lake in a boating excursion, which may have made Mrs. Shelley dislike the water. Then, unfortunately, some ugly fellows, who roused alarm in the neighbourhood and caused half Keswick to sit up, and obliged Southey himself at Greta Hall, "to take down a rusty gun and manfully load it, for the satisfaction of the family,"¹ paid a visit to Chestnut Hill, presented them-

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. III., p. 316.

selves at the door on the night of Sunday, Jan. 10, and knocked Shelley down when he came to open it. For further particulars of this burglarious attack, readers are referred to the *Cumberland Pacquet* of Jan. 28, 1812.

To add to all these disagreeables, Shelley, anxious to explain some elementary chemical phenomena, made hydrogen gas in a retort after dark, and roused the suspicions of Gideon Dare, who felt that it was quite time to get rid of anything so like the black art, and calling next day presented his compliments to Mr. Shelley, and begged to say that he must suit himself elsewhere.

Now all these things were against him, and Shelley determined to leave an ungrateful, hateful Keswick for the Land o' the Green, and to take the next slate-brig that sailed from Whitehaven for Dublin Bay.

But Calvert was true to the last; and though it was probably sadly against his wife's wish to have that dreadful talker of strange doctrines, in season and out of season, within bowshot of her boys' or girls' ears, the Shelleys nevertheless were invited to spend the last week of their sojourn in the vale at Windy Brow.

On Sunday, Feb. 2, 1812, Shelley and his wife and Eliza Westbrook turned their back for ever on Keswick. Calvert's kindness was still fresh in his mind, and writing a letter "from this filthy town and horrible inn," dated at Whitehaven, Feb. 3, he says:—"We felt regret at leaving Keswick. I passed Southey's house without *one* sting. He is a man who *may* be amiable in his private character, stained and false as is his public one. He may be amiable, but, if he is, my feelings are liars, and

I have been so long accustomed to trust to them in these cases, that the opinion of the world is not the likeliest correction to impeach their credibility. But we left the Calverts with (regret)? I hope some day to show you *Mrs.* Calvert. I shall not forget her, but will preserve her memory as another flower to compose a garland which I intend to present to *you*. Harriet and Eliza, in excellent spirits, bid you affectionate adieu.

Adieu,

Your P. B. SHELLEY."¹

So Shelley, Southey's ghost in feature and voice, as well as in youthful dreams, to mend or end all, went away from Keswick with mixed feelings. Towards Southey—though in later years the young poet acknowledged how really kind and courteous the bard at Greta Hall had been—Shelley bore for long, feelings of bitter aversion, so that on November 6, 1817, when eight years had passed, Crabbe Robinson tells us:—"I went to Godwin's. Mr. Shelley was there. I had never seen him before. His youth, and a resemblance to Southey, particularly in his voice, raised a pleasing expression, which was not altogether destroyed by his conversation, though it is vehement, and arrogant, and intolerant. He was very abusive towards Southey, whom he spoke of as having sold himself to the Court. And this he maintained with the usual party slang. His pension and his Laureateship, his early zeal and his recent virulence, are the proofs of gross corruption." Crabbe Robinson adds, "On every topic but that of violent

¹ MacCarthy's *Early Life of Shelley*, p. 136.

party feeling, the friends of Southey are under no difficulty in defending him. Shelley spoke of Wordsworth with less bitterness, but with an insinuation of his insincerity," etc.¹

It was certainly a strange right-about-face that Shelley had made in his feeling for, and view of, Southey. "Southey," he wrote to Miss Hitchener, two days after Christmas day, 1811, "though far from being a man of great reasoning powers, is a great man. He has all that characterises the poet: great eloquence, though obstinacy of opinion, which arguments are the last things that can shake. He is a man of virtue. He will never belie what he thinks; his professions are in compatibility with his practice."²

Yet, within a month, could this kind, fatherly friend at Greta Hall appear such a monster of sham and superstition that Shelley could leave Keswick without a farewell, and pass Greta Hall gate without a sting!

But at least if Shelley had no regret at leaving Southey and Greta Hall friends, he took away from Keswick a delightful memory of Mrs. Calvert.

Those who have looked upon the pretty little pencil drawing of her, in her quaint scuttle bonnet, or half hat, half bonnet, will see at once what a remarkable face Mrs. William Calvert must have had. And those who have been permitted to peep into the family house-keeping account she kept, will see that while her husband was a man of ideas, a man of fine intellectual sympathies, whose bane was procrastination, and whose motto was "never do

¹ *Henry Crabbe Robinson's Diary*, ed. by Dr. Sadler, Vol. II., p. 67.

² *Life of Shelley*, by Dowden, Vol. I., p. 213.

to-day what you can do to-morrow," Mrs. Calvert was "practical, methodical," and capable of being as good or better a steward of the Duke of Norfolk's estates than ever Calvert could have been. Accomplished too was Mrs. Calvert, to judge by her beautiful pencil sketches of her husband's face that remain to us; and as for kindness, let Southey's letters attest how thoughtful for her friends she was, and how careful for the welfare of other households, even down to seeing that they were supplied with such cats as "The Zombi," or "Othello," to keep down the mice. But if a mother be judged by her children, then let Dr. John Calvert, Sterling's friend, whom Carlyle described as "a very human, lovable, good, and nimble man—the laughing blue eyes of him, the clear cheery soul of him, still redolent of the fresh Northern breezes and transparent Mountain streams,"¹ let this man rise up and speak for her; or let that little Mary Calvert, who grew up the girl-friend of Sara Coleridge and Edith May Southey, and the beloved of Dora Wordsworth be witness; she who remembered going with such pride to help Edith to make and put the wreath of laurel on her father's head when he returned to Greta Hall in 1813 as Poet Laureate.

This Mary Calvert, wedded in August, 1824, with Mr. Joshua Stanger, heard the poet Southey make his delightful speech at the wedding breakfast; while, for all that brother John's blue eyes laughed so merrily, her bridesmaids were sad, and Sara Coleridge's dark eyes grew dewy, and Dora Wordsworth's grey eyes softened and filled with mist. She left her girlhood's friends and was

¹ Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling*, Part II., chap. v.

parted from the valley of her love for nineteen years. Yet her heart was with this home of her youth ; and hither she returned the year that Southey died ; and in the house whose entrance from the main road is not a bowshot from Shelley's old lodging on Chestnut Hill, she dwelt for forty-seven years. That home, high-lifted with finest prospect of the Keswick Vale of any known hereabout, with sound of falling water at her door, and yew-tree shade above her roof, to remind her of the old farm house of Fieldside which it supplanted, saw gathered within its hospitable walls the fading circle of friends that made the Lakeland famous. Thither came the Southey children, thither the Coleridges, and the Wordsworths. On its walls were the tokens of that fair friendship, in pictures of the poets and their belongings. In its bookshelves the writings of the honoured Lakeland School. And hidden away in secret drawers, the cherished albums filled with scraps, and letters, and verse of the famous guests and friends.

There, with a perpetual fund of anecdote and merriment from a heart that softened, but never saddened with years, dwelt Mrs. Stanger, the merry little Mary Calvert, who, in the old days, remembered how Shelley had been sorely troubled when he opened out a packet one day at Windy Brow to find that the work-box he had designed for Mr. Calvert's little girl was not there ; and remembered too the trouble upon her mother's and father's faces, when the young firebrand began to let off his fireworks before Miss Mary and Master John had been removed from the dining-room, and had been sent up to bed.

The friend of the poor,

“In humblest homes a helpful visitor,”

as Derwent Coleridge wrote of her; in her own home, to all visitors who cared about the olden time, she too was helpful ever.

“In her dear hands were gathered
The various strings of grateful memory
To pluck them at our bidding one by one.”

And last remaining of the charmed circle of the Lake school of literati hereabout, she well deserves to be classed among those whose associations with the Lake-land-poet households bestowed not least worth, and added not least interest, to her beloved vale.

How many times did one leave Shelley's cottage and Chestnut Hill, and pass up the road towards Ambleside for one hundred paces; thence enter the park-like meadow-land made glorious with the rich background of Latrigger larch and the purple of Blencathra's hazel bowers, and look from Fieldside's lawn of sun and shade

“Down the steep cleft thro' which the Greta flows,
Hurrying to Brundholme's overhanging wood”;

and

“Seated or pacing the long terrace walk
That fronts the high-placed cottage . . .
Decked as it is with all that graces life,”

feel all the good days come back again of Calvert, Shelley, Coleridge, and Southey, as one listened to that genial talk of the lady of Fieldside, or saw, not infrequently, the tear gather as she spoke of the dear

Greta Bank and Greta Hall times, and, pointing to the far-off church of St. Kentigern in the valley, heard her say: "My time, dear sir, cannot be long now. I hope to see them all again." Then the face would brighten and she would add, "If ever good man lived it was Robert Southey. I have known many able men in my life, I have known none more unselfish in his thought and deed, more beautiful in his home life and his affections, than he; dear sir, Southey's goodness will surely live for ever."

She had but one wish, "that her mind might by God's mercy hold out as long as its case," and that prayer was granted. At the time appointed, at the ripe age of eighty-seven, she fell on sleep and was borne on February 10, 1890, by sorrowing hands, to the sound of muffled bells and mourning waterflood, down the long steep, and by the shining river, away to the old churchyard of Crosthwaite, in the valley.

CHAPTER V

KESWICK

GRAY'S VISIT TO KESWICK: SIR JOHN BANKES: BANKES' CHARITY:

DR. BROWNRIGG: JONATHAN OTLEY: CLIFTON WARD:

FREDERICK MYERS: WILLIAM AND LUCY SMITH

WE leave Fieldside and pass up towards the Toll-bar and so win "The Moor." But we halt often and turn round, for the sun is chasing shadow across the plain; Bassenthwaite gleams like "the flashing of a shield," Derwentwater is divinely blue, and the mountain heads from "Glaramara to westernmost Wythop" are clad in glorious pomp of autumn purple and gold.

We may imagine ourselves back a whole century and a quarter. That man who has turned round at a spot just beyond the larch plantation to gaze backward, is a poet. You would hardly think it, there is such a refinement of dandyism about him. So dapper is he of dress, from the well-tied bob-wig to the brass buttons on his drab knee-breeches, from well-starched stock to shining shoe-buckle, you would guess he was a city exquisite,

rather than some strolling poet. But you will understand when you see his neatness, how it came to pass that he left behind him in such faultless handwriting that three-volumed common-place book which Pembroke College so carefully guards. His face is pale, you might almost believe that he is not long for this world, and yet he is light of step and will accomplish a three hundred mile walk before he returns to Cambridge for the October term. His brow fine, his nose parrot-shaped, his mouth and chin not strong features, are made weaker by the "neb" as the northerners call it. He has been staying for a week at Keswick on this his first tour to the Lakes, in October of 1769, and he is alone. His companion in travel, Dr. Wharton, was seized with asthma at Brough, and we who read Gray's Journal are not sorry. It was because of that seizure that Gray's Journal of his visit to the Lakes was written, in order that his would-be fellow-traveller might know how Gray the companionless fared.

And here we are in imagination chatting on the Ambleside road-track over the open common to the moor (for the turnpike was not in those days), at the superbest point of view for Derwentwater and the Keswick vale, with the author of an Elegy that shall live as long as English verse is read. Glad enough he is to escape from the horror of the impending rocks of Borrowdale, to the more open country of Helvellyn, but for all that loath to leave the scenes he had found so fair in this sweet vale of Keswick. And, looking for a moment from the play of sudden sunlight upon lake and mountain and plain spread out before us, we see by the light and

shadow in Gray's face that he has indeed, as he tells us he had, on that 8th day of October, 1769, "almost a mind to have gone back again";¹ but he is evidently too frail a man to be warranted in taking the extra fatigue of twice mounting this long climb from the Keswick vale; and he has a long Sunday walk before him, for he means to reach Ambleside to-night. Right glad we are that he did not attempt it; for we know from his Journal that when he reached Ambleside, he looked into "the best bed-chamber" of the inn there, and finding it, as he says, "dark and damp as a cellar, grew delicate, gave up *Wynander-mere* in despair, and resolved I would go on to *Kendal* directly."²

But at least we may learn before we part with our poet-friend, what in his judgment are the best "stations" or spots from which to view the beauties of the Keswick valley. There can be no doubt as to what he will say. In his judgment these are Crow Park, Cockshott, Castle Hill, the Vicarage Hill, the rising ground at the end of Great Wood, just beneath Falcon Crag and Grange.

"In the evening," says the dapper little man, "walked alone down to the Lake by the side of Crow Park";³ Crow Park with the roots of the huge oak trees still visible; oaks once part of the primeval forest, which made Keswick valley the fear of the Roman, and may well have caused the Norse invaders, Ketil, Ormr, Walla,

¹ *Works of Thomas Gray*, ed. by E. Gosse, *Journal in the Lakes*, Vol. I., p. 264.

² *Idem*, p. 267.

³ *Gray's Journal in the Lakes*, Vol. I., p. 258.

and Sweyn to have their village camps on high ground. These oak trees have long since gone, "full charged with English thunder to plough the stormy main." The Greenwich Hospital which entered upon the estates of the attainted Earl of Derwentwater, and certain Whitehaven shipyards are to blame.

"Walked to Crow Park," says Gray, . . . "I prefer it (the view from thence) even to Cockshut Hill"¹ or Castle Hill. Pass along by the packhorse track through Great Wood, and when under Falcon Crag be sure to get the view both ways. Above the Carf-close-reeds, the Claude mirror will play its part divinely.

"From hence" (Castle Hill), continues the poet, "I got to the Parsonage. . . . This is the sweetest scene I can yet discover in point of pastoral beauty."² If you wish for other stations from which to view Skiddaw and the Crosthwaite Vale aright, go over Portinscale Bridge and thus to the right to the Howe Farm. Thence back to Portinscale, and so to the woods and rising ground called the "Park"—Fawe Park of to-day—whilst for a final station or view point, you must mount part of the road he has just come and go along "the Penrith Road two miles or more," and turn "into a corn-field to the right called Castlerigg," where he "saw a Druid circle of large stones, one hundred and eight feet in diameter, the biggest not eight feet high, but most of them still erect: they are fifty in number, the valley of *Naddle* appeared in sight and the fells of St. John's, particularly the summits of *Catchidecam* (called by

¹ *Gray's Journal in the Lakes*, Vol. I., p. 259.

² *Idem*, p. 260.

Camden *Casticand*) and *Helvellyn*, said to be as high as *Skiddaw*, and to arise from a much higher base.”¹

We thank the poet Gray and part. That lane to the left that we had almost passed as we chatted with our guide is Rakefoot Lane. It has a good Icelandic shepherd’s ring about it, for the *Rachan*, or *Reckan*, or *Rekkan*, is in Icelandic still the narrow way by which the Norsemen drive their flocks, afield or home; when the sheep follow their leader in single file we still say hereabout, “How the sheep are raking.”

The old Roman Camp once lay somewhere close by, and later, the castle of the Lords of Derwentwater frowned from the Castlerigg. Its stones or some of them may still be seen in the masonry of the Keswick Town Hall. For the stones were sledged down from hence to Stable Hill, and built up at the bidding of Sir Thomas Ratcliffe, into a manor house on Lord’s Island, it is conjectured about 1751. In 1757, some of its material was ferried across to the building of the ungainly Market House, the nuisance of our time. Tradition has it, that a certain Will Monkhouse perished by having over-loaded his boat with the material—boat, stones, and William sunk in mid channel; it is believed the stones and the boat remain at the bottom of the lake at this day. It is certain from the Crosthwaite Register that William Monkhouse was buried in the churchyard of St. Kentigern in 1757. But this is a digression.

Rakefoot with its castle reminds one of Corfe Castle, in Dorsetshire, wherein a brave woman stood her ground

¹ *Gray’s Journal in the Lakes*, Vol. I., p. 261.

though it was raked by cannon and culverin; and repelled a triple assault upon it, in the stormy times of Roundhead and Cavalier. That lady, the heroine of the Isle of Purbeck for those three years of the Great Rebellion, at one time held her castle-fortress against the Parliamentarians, when only she and her maidservants could guard the walls and serve the guns; and on the 4th of August, 1643, was, by her splendid courage, and the resolute aid of some eighty soldiers, delivered "from the bloody intentions of those merciless rebels," Sir W. Erle and Thomas Trenchard. This was Lady Bankes, wife of the Right Hon. Sir John Bankes, chief justice of common pleas, who, discharging the duties of privy councillor of King Charles I. to the last day of his life, died on December 28, 1644, at Oxford, and was buried in the Christ Church Cathedral.

Sir John Bankes may well be ranked among illustrious men of the lake district. The letters from ill-fated Stafford, then Lord Wentworth, "to my much respected friend, Sir John Bankes," are full of affectionate regard for a man who, by his justice and integrity, so won the heart of foe and friend that, though he subscribed to the famous declaration made by the lords and gentlemen with the King at York, June 15, 1642, and was Royalist to the last, was nevertheless continued in his office by the Parliamentarians in 1643.

Bold and fearless for his conscience sake to the end, Sir John Bankes scrupled not, when on the bench at Salisbury in 1643, to declare the action of Essex, Manchester, and Waller treasonable; and had not natural

death befriended him, would like enough have suffered later for his sturdy independence.

Where did Sir John Bankes win his lessons in manliness and loyalty? Where did he go to school and find that *mens conscia recti* was the noblest mind?

He learnt his lesson on this breezy Castle Ridge. The purple woods and fells, the stormy winter mountains, the freedom and hopefulness of our English spring, the solemn pomp of autumn—these were his teachers. Sir John Bankes was born in a simple yeoman home, at Castlerigg, by the side of the Rakefoot “lonning.” All the early schooling that he got he doubtless received at the old High School, by the Crosthwaite Church gates.

Go down into Keswick, and ask for Rigg’s Coach Office, and, by kind permission, the curious in such old world days may see the Wainscot Room, and the groined ceiling of the Town House, where the lad grew up to boyhood, after that his father, the yeoman farmer, had left his sheep upon the fells, to take to sale of household stuff, and of such good worsteds, cotton, and harden-sark, as were then worthy merchandise.

“Fair seedtime had his soul”: the native modesty and simple piety of our best Cumberland dalesmen was his unto the end. The only epitaph he desired upon his tomb were the words: “Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be glory.”

And this was the man who, when he was Attorney General, was, in 1635, recommended to the King for promotion to the office of High Treasurer, as exceeding

Bacon in eloquence, Chancellor Ellesmere in judgment, and William Noy in law.

Like the young Lord Clifford¹ in Sir Lancelot Threlkeld's keeping there beneath the slopes of Blencathra, he had in his laborious life of law-court and kings' chambers, never forgotten the love that he had found "in huts where poor men lie." He knew the bitterness of the end of those who, when strength fails them, must cease to labour, and when they cease to labour, must feel want. As a dying man he remembered the poor of Keswick, and determined that a kind of workhouse, properly so called, should be endowed, wherein the poor should find labour for their hands and rest unto their minds. An almshouse wherein, not carted off almost like prisoners to a far-off cheerless home, but here, in the midst of their friends and home associations, without stain or blot upon their necessity and dependence, the respectable poor should find asylum, a warm roof above, beneath, food and friendliness. He did this charitable deed with the sole proviso that they who were helped should help themselves. So he bequeathed £30 per annum to his native town of Keswick for the support of a manufactory of coarse cottons. The Almshouse Factory has ceased to be. The Cockermouth Union has taken its place, but still in Keswick, each year, the worthy poor find 5s. a week a kind of guarantee against homelessness, or its alternative, the Cockermouth Union. This is the result of the Bankes Charity. God bless the worthy Chief Justice of the High Court of Common Pleas, who died in 1644.

¹ Cf. Vol. II., p. 3, *et seq.*

Let us go into Keswick and visit the spot where old Sir John Bankes' Almshouse once stood. We shall find a brand new post office has dispossessed it of its being, and in a side wall may read an inscription that tells us of its one time existence.

If, in our imagination, it chance to be January 6, 1800, we shall hear a bell tolling at Crosthwaite Church, and by its "tellers" we shall know it is a man who is dead. The blinds at Ormathwaite Hall are all down, and folk in Keswick say, "T' auld Doctor, he's just deead."

Yes, at the age of eighty, William Brownrigg, one of the most original chemists of his day, the most illustrious son of a family who have been settled at Ormathwaite since 1677, has just passed away. He began life as a doctor at Whitehaven; took to researches into "Mephitic Exhalations" of the coal pits there, as causing disease among the miners; wrote on choke damp, and the need of ventilation in mines; analysed the waters of the mineral springs of Spa, far famed throughout Europe; first described the new metal which had been brought to England from Cartagena by a relative of Brownrigg's in 1741, white gold as it was then called, to-day called platinum. And in 1748, when a salt famine was feared in England he published an essay on the practice of salt-making in various parts of the world, and suggested the establishment of salt pans all along our coast; inquired into the cause of jail fever, and wrote *Considerations on the Means of Preventing Contagion and Eradicating Infection*. One does not wonder that Black, Priestley, Benjamin Franklin,

and all the chief scientists of that day were in correspondence with William Brownrigg; nor that he died a Copley Medallist and F.R.S. None can gainsay the literal truth of the terse epitaph to his memory in Crosthwaite Church.

But how one would wish to have been in his company on that wild day in 1772, when Sir John Pringle, president of the Royal Society, and Dr. Benjamin Franklin, then guests at Ormathwaite, put off in a boat to the middle of Derwentwater, and proceeded to make the first experiment that had ever been made to ascertain the effect of "pouring oil on troubled waters."

The facts of that experiment may be found in the sixty-fourth volume of the Royal Society's *Philosophical Transactions*: the results may be seen in the use to which oil is frequently put nowadays, in calming heavy seas.

I confess I never enter the Bank and Post Office in Keswick without thoughts of the Keswick lad, upon whom old Doctor Brownrigg's mantle fell, and who was born close by about the year of the Doctor's death; a certain Jobby Duglison, who became one of the ablest and best teachers of physiology in his day in America;—for it was at the bank that his mother lived until her death. Duglison began his literary work in 1817, by a paper in the *London Monthly* on "The Floating Island on Derwentwater," and in later life he wrote his *Legends of the English Lakes*. He died in 1869, just one hundred years after the poet Gray's visit to Keswick.

Let us go back in fancy to that favourite view-point

of the poet and think of others who were doing what they could, here in the beginning of the century, to keep the lamps of science, and thought, and literature alight in Keswick and its neighbourhood.

We will descend this time from the moor by the Toll-bar and Castlette, and so enter the town by St. John's, and Derwentwater Place, for we would see not only the home of Jonathan Otley, but the dwelling place of the Rev. F. Myers, and the lodging of that remarkable man William Smith, the too little known author of *Thorndale*.

On our way we pass the Manor House. Close by it may be seen an old cottage tenanted, but sublet in part, by a certain Younghusband, to which Jonathan Otley, a young swill-maker of very ancient Grasmere stock, came at the age of twenty-five to follow his calling. He had had such schooling as Langdale and Ambleside schools could give, but his eyes and his love of using them had done most for him.

Board and lodging was not as costly as it is now. His agreement with his landlord was for 4s. 8d. a week, and this included four square meals a day. He tried hard to get his host to put in his Sunday meals for nothing, but to this the host objected; "Nay, nay," said he, "we boil the pot on Sunday, barn," so the pot was paid for.

Here he worked at his baskets and his swills for five and a half years. Here, till 1797, the swill-maker sat in the little shop-room that still overlooks the main road; and gradually his fame grew. He was not only a swill-maker but a watch and clock "reightler" too, and as I have heard tell, "cliverest man wi' his hands here-

about, I suppose." And when all the watches in the country-side came into his clever, honest hands to be "fettled up," it was more convenient for their owners that he should dwell nearer the Market Place. So in 1797, he removed to a lodging in Kings-head Yard, and there, though his bill for board and lodging went up by bounds till it stood at 10s. a week, the clock-maker lived for fifty-five years.

This man lodging at the tiny cottage up the steps in Kings-head Yard was noticed to be constantly away on the hills—talking with the fox-hunters as to the local names of the various crags; tracking streams to their sources; discovering fountain heads in far fellside or quiet woody places, carefully cleansing them of fallen leaves and planting flowers here and there about them; observing winds and storms; going off to the Floating Island; marking high and low lake level on the rocks at Friars' Crag; going to the high fells with a barometer to make observations as to altitudes; coming home with his hands full of botanical examples and his pockets full of various specimens of lava and volcanic ash. This man, Jonathan Otley—the Gilbert White of Keswick—had many visitors to his little clock-maker's den, "Jonathan's up the steps" as it was called. Dr. Dalton, the great chemist, would go there. Dalton had met Otley first on Skiddaw in July, 1812, and noted then that he was carrying a barometer and was taking observations. He got into conversation with him, and the result was a life-long friendship,—extending over thirty-one years,—much correspondence and many

a mountain excursion together for scientific research. Professor Phillips, the curator of the York Museum, Professor Sedgwick, and with him Murphy of the Ordnance Survey, and later Sir George Airy, the Astronomer Royal, were constant visitors to the watch-maker's little shop. These all came to love him for his graciousness and refinement of character, as they all came to him for accurate observation and for help in scientific research. All took him into their confidence, and treated him as a friend and a brother.

For Jonathan Otley, shy retired man as he was, a man who said little and thought the more, was a reader and thinker, and his correspondence shows that he was a gentleman in all he did and thought.

What was he like? Those who enter the Cumberland Union Bank and ask to be shown Daniel Crosthwaite's oil painting of Jonathan, can satisfy themselves on this point. The old man's face is full of tender feeling and quiet reflectiveness. The grey eyes are at once keen and gentle, the mouth most sensitive, and the whole features are those of one who, "retired as noontide dew," has so communed with nature that the

"beauty born of murmuring sound
Has passed into his face."

It is, I think, impossible to exaggerate the sense of natural refinement that is seen in Otley's countenance.

Now, what claim has Otley to be ranked among those with whom there are literary associations in this Lake District?

He was the writer of the first Guide that made the district easy of access. That Guide, with its beautiful outline sketches of the various hills, has been the foundation of all accurate guide books since. It was published in 1823 under the title, *A Concise Description of the English Lakes and Adjacent Mountains*, and is a monument of careful original research.

In 1815 he gave Dr. Dalton the first accurate account of the phenomenon of the Floating Island; some of its peculiarities were enshrined in the archives of the Manchester Philosophical Society. In 1818 he published the first accurate map of the district. One does not wish to under-rate the excellent charts of the various lakes which that worthy old sea captain, Peter Crosthwaite, drew and published as early as 1783; but these maps, though they are intensely interesting as far as the Lake dwellings of that day are concerned, and accurate as far as the shore lines and water depths go, did not attempt to deal with the outlines of measurements or stratification of the fells and mountain masses that lie between the lakes.

But it is as a geologist, or rather as the father of geology of this district, that "Jonathan Otley up the steps" will be remembered.

It was Otley who first introduced Sedgwick to Cumbrian geology. He used to tell Dr. Lietch, with some pardonable pride, how he went across "Willy" or "Wiley" Ghyll in Skiddaw Forest, and showed Professor Sedgwick where the Skiddaw granite made its appearance. But what brought Otley most note was a paper published

in 1820, *Remarks on the Succession of the Rocks in the District of the Lakes*. Sedgwick was profoundly impressed with it. And in 1831 he told the Geological Society that Jonathan Otley had been the first to recognise that "the greater part of the central region of the Lake Mountains is occupied by three distinct groups of stratified rocks of a slaty texture."¹

"We owe," says he again in 1836, "our first accurate knowledge of these subdivisions to Mr. Jonathan Otley of Keswick, who not merely described them in general terms, but gave their true geographical distribution with a very near approach to accuracy."²

Professor Phillips, in 1856, writing of Jonathan Otley's geological work, says: "The earliest notice of a real and firm distinction between cleavage and stratification, derived from English examples, which I have met with is in Otley's *Concise Description of the English Lakes*, which notice appeared first in the *Kirkby Lonsdale Magazine*, in 1820."³

The correspondence that has been preserved betwixt Otley and Dalton, Phillips and Sedgwick and Airy, is full not only of anxious questioning and answer as to scientific details, such as rock-bed, rock-joints, cleavage stripes, boulder distribution, Mell Fell and Kirby Lonsdale conglomerates, view-points, ordnance cairns, rock cisterns on Great Gable, temperatures, lake levels and the like, but it is full of affection also; hearty soul-grasp, tender home-life details, local gossip, solicitous inquiry after personal health and personal friends.

¹ *Transactions of the Cumberland Association*, Part II., p. 144.

² *Idem*.

³ *Idem*, p. 146.

Thus Sedgwick writes in 1853: "I cannot forget the happy and laborious days I spent in Cumberland, and the pleasure and instruction I had from your society. Alas! thirty-one years have passed away since I first saw you at Keswick. . . . Pray, send me some Keswick news."¹ The old man, then in the eighty-seventh year, tells him in reply, that till March in the former year he had been so well in health that he had walked two or three times a week to Barrow Side, and spent hours in amusing himself by forming little wells of the springs that arise in the mountain side.

Let me interpose, that in Jonathan's Journal of this date occurs the entry, March 16, 1852: "At spring on Barrow Common, planted now and before, water cress, scurvy grass, veronica, and forget-me-not."

The old man goes on to tell Sedgwick, that he went last April to Friars' Crag in the drought to note the water-level on the rock. He reached the Lake last on Sept. 4, and began to feel that the old stone stairs which he had climbed for fifty-five years were too hard for him, and so had removed to a house near his old friend, Charles Wright. In his love of observation he cannot help adding as postscript, "Tuesday morning, May 10; gloomy and cold, snow on Skiddaw, more on Helvellyn."²

Other letters pass in following years, full of notes of calcareous slates, hard Coniston grit, lower and middle Cumbrian series, and such like details. His friend Sedg-

¹ *Transactions of the Cumberland Association*, Part II., p. 158

² *Idem*, p. 159.

wick hopes to come down to Keswick in 1855, and the geologist writes that he has very mixed feelings. He cannot help being glad at the thought of a sight of him, but he cannot help the painful thought that he will be unable to walk the hills with him as twenty-eight years ago they did, though even then he remembers Sedgwick had the better legs of the two. But he adds, "Having entered my ninetieth year I have the use of my limbs, and a good appetite, . . . on a fine day I am able to walk to the water-side."¹

There is a touching description of one of these walks of the infirm old naturalist to the water-side, when he was in his eighty-seventh year, by his friend and biographer, Dr. Lietch.

"On Tuesday, April 27th, 1852, after a long time of very dry weather, rowing near Friars' Crag, we saw old Jonathan Otley (then aged eighty-six) carefully picking his way over the rough rocks towards his famous low water-mark. He had cut a notch in the rock, in the dry summer of 1824, and by this he had ever since chronicled the levels of the lake. In the dry summer of 1826 it was once below the mark of 1824; and in the still drier summer of 1844 it was four inches below the level of 1824. The feeble veteran—feeble, but not unhealthy or infirm—picking slowly his way by the help of his staff, in the light of the setting sun, along the shore to this ancient record, in order to 'describe a new remarkable event' of the valley, seemed like tradition creeping and stumbling forward to chronicle

¹ *Transactions of the Cumberland Association*, Part II., p. 163.

the silent births of time. There was something very characteristic of the man in the scene and the situation, and I should have liked very much to have had his figure drawn as he appeared, moving along, in his well-known solitary, quiet manner, amid the scenes which he has loved, and done so much to make familiar to others, during more than half a century; and busied too in one of these careful, accurate observations for which he has long been famous. The evening light, the low calm, almost silent waters of the lake—for they scarcely lapped against the crag at his feet—the rough track he was treading, and all the sights and sounds which in this valley accompany the close of the day, were in harmony with the idea of the old man. The waters of life were low with him now, weak as the ripple scarcely breaking on the rock, yet they were calm and bright withal. . . . The similitude between the hour and the man, the sunset and the departing life, became so impressive, that it was an unpleasant shock to see him slip and fall on the rock, as though the life had so nearly toppled over on the shores of time. Fortunately, however, no harm was done; the veteran first examining his hand, gathered himself up, and then with redoubled caution proceeded on his errand. We pulled the boat up to the rock, and after hearing him say, with one of his little pleasant chuckles ending in a low whistle or what seemed like a whistle out of one side of his mouth, that he was ‘nothing the worse,’ we accompanied him to his notch in the rock known as ‘Jonathan Otley’s mark,’ and I saw him, with a piece of slate stick and an inch rule, go

through his careful process of registering the level of the lake."

But Jonathan Otley's life was drawing to a close. He should make no more water-marks upon Friars' Crag. The eyes that had once, on a clear day, seen the Welsh mountains from Coniston Fell, and thrice from Skiddaw had looked upon the Irish hills, were looking out beyond other seas to other hills, even the heights of heaven. Now and again we hear in his talk a note of extreme loneliness. The old man who held companionship with cloud and torrent, birds and flowers, lichen, mossy rocks, and shining waterfalls, feels the prison-house of his infirmity a heavy weight upon him.

Then comes silently to this good waiter and watcher the first angel stroke of paralysis. On August of 1855, a second, and he lies bedfast in his home near the Picture Gallery in St. John's Street, helpless and speechless. Professor Sedgwick calls to see him. Otley is quite sensible and recognises his friend, reaches his withered hand, that though it would, can ill give hearty hand-grasp now. There is a silence, their eyes meet, and the tender-hearted Professor bursts into tears and cries, as he falls upon his knees, "Jonathan, I'll pray with you."¹

Still for three months the veteran guide and geologist waits and watches; notes constantly the change of shadow and light upon his little bed-room wall, as the days shorten, and December darkens, till at the last, at five o'clock of the seventh day of that Christmas month, he,

¹ *Life and Letters of Sedgwick*. Clark & Hughes. Vol. II., p. 325.

having nearly completed his ninety-first year, gives up the ghost; and whilst his spirit goes forth, no longer guide but to be guided, his body is borne to sound of forward hymn and muffled tread of many mourners, to the Poet's Corner in the Crosthwaite Churchyard.

The old clock in the church tower strikes as we stand and read the inscription to this Guide, Botanist, Geologist, and Meteorologist. His hand gave that old clock power to strike; and though it be now after long years "a crazy clock with a bewildered chime," we feel, for love of the hand that made it, that it may strike on as it will; for no man ever lived that better deserved to have inscribed above his rest:—"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." And better than riches it is to have the memory of such simplicity and worth as was Jonathan Otley's.

As we gaze across from the Brow top, or Castlette Cottage, once the abode of Jonathan Otley, we see the Castlehead, wooded to its top, where one time stood the Roman legionary as he signalled to the camp on Castrigg, and flashed his message by spear-head to Caermote beyond Bassenthwaite, or Castle Rock in Borrowdale; and one goes on to think how many years had elapsed before Castlehead, that great stopper in a volcano's mouth, gave up the secrets of its make and origin.

Otley was one of the first who questioned it of its history. The building of a new church was the means of his inquiry. "It chanced," he tells us in a letter

dated Dec. 20, 1836, to his friend Professor Sedgwick, who had written asking him for his observations on the angles of rock-joints, dip-joints, master-joints, strike-joints, and the strike and cleavage of rock-beds, "that there is a quarry opened on the east side of Castlehead where they are getting slates for the new church, now building at the south end of Keswick," the church of St. John's. And to this church-building in 1836 the geological world owes it, that one of the problems of rock-joints in the Cumbrian slate was made plain.

But it remained for another geologist, Clifton Ward, the loving biographer of Jonathan, to tell us how once the volcano spouted flame and dust from here, and forced from its central heart of fire, ashes for the building of our Lake-land hills. He now alas! lies,

"Dust to dust in this volcanic land,
Whose secrets he so well could understand,"

in the churchyard of St. John's just at the foot of the Castlehead, and many a generation of men must pass before another such a lover of our hills and such an observer of their making, such a discoverer of their prehistoric moulding, shall move, goat-footed from crag to crag, and find, in following nature, nature's God.

Clifton Ward, whose accurate and scientific work on the Government Survey of this District will be to all time his best monument, and whose monograph of geological notes,—to accompany his survey,—is a classic, found as he roamed through these hills so much of rest unto his soul, so much of the oracles of the mind of

God in nature, so much of the Creator's loving will graven upon His table of stone,—which our mountains were to him,—that he desired to speak of it to others. He took orders and became colleague of the then vicar of St. John's.

Frail of body from the first, he had hardly realised how much of his strength had then gone in the work of his arduous calling as Geological Surveyor. He took cold, and at an early age passed into that world of light and fuller knowledge he so desired; but all who are interested in the literary and scientific associations of our English lakes must bow the head at his grave side, and remember that if to Jonathan Otley we owe the first classification of our Cumbrian slates, to Clifton Ward we are indebted for what is probably the last word on the matter, so far as human observation can now go. Nor should it be forgotten that the whole of Cumberland to-day owes its network of literary and scientific societies to the desire and will, the resolute purpose and foresight of this good man.

As we descend the hill into Keswick, Faber the poet comes to mind. He who knew the country beyond the Raise the best, the singer of the Bratha, and the poet of Black Combe, had still in his heart room for the beauties of Derwentwater and the glory of that unrivalled scene which is spread out before us as we take our stand on Castlehead.

One remembers the opening stanza of his poem *Castle Hill, Keswick*.

“Come let us gather here upon the hill
The noble hearts that yet beat pure and high,
And, while the lake beneath our feet is still,
Sweetly our speech may run on chivalry.”

So sings Faber, as in fancy he stands, sees the “sun sinking in the west”; watches “on great Blencathra’s haunted crest” “the purple folds of summer twilight wind,” and lets the loveliness and beauty of the scene sink into his heart, “where summer day fades o’er yon Cumbrian mountains far away.” One does not forget how Faber’s verse shows that he has been “where Greta flows,” and Glenderaterra, and the nameless streams; that he has roamed the woods to the west of Derwent-water is evidenced by his sonnet *Keswick*, under date August 3rd, 1838.

“The four black pools the woodman finds,
Far in the depths of some unsunny place,
As silent and as fearful as a dead man’s face,”

may still be found there, and Faber may be seen close by; but it is pre-eminently Castlehead that is associated with his name.

Now, by the new church, quarried from the Castlehead, we pass, and cannot but remember how the first pastor of that church, though not a poet himself, was the father of a poet of whom we need not be ashamed, and was one whose constant thought and endeavour after higher life for the people amongst whom he moved, and higher wishes and diviner thought for the church he served, has left behind him a name of gracious sweetness that we would not let die. Frederick Myers, the Maurice of the

north, has not, it is true, left much literary work behind him, but his *Essays on Great Men*, his *Catholic Thoughts on the Church of Christ and the Church of England*, stamp his genius and his desires as at once original and ennobling. Here, at the end of Derwentwater Place, is the St. John's Library, which Myers planned before the days of free libraries for the people.

How Myers impressed one of his contemporaries may be gathered from the account given by the late Bishop Harvey Goodwin, who now lies at rest in this beloved valley, and whose young undergraduate imagination was fired to be up and doing by his introduction to Myers in years long gone by.

Goodwin had come to Keswick to read for Cambridge with Thompson, afterward Master of Trinity. Keswick was still the Keswick not only of Jonathan Otley but of Robert Southey. It was Mr. Bush, then curate of Crossthwaite, who introduced the young collegian to Myers, and he took the fancy of the Cambridge student immensely; but it was not till 1840, when Goodwin brought a reading party to Brow Top, that he saw much of Myers. "I found his society," says Goodwin, "exceedingly agreeable, and, as I thought, profitable." At first sight there is not much in common in their mental characteristics. Myers was "utterly unmathematical and unmusical, careless of the honours of the schools; dreamy, mystical, fond of German speculations, and having an ecclesiastical system almost his own." What was it then that attracted young Goodwin, the Cambridge coach, to Frederick Myers, the Keswick parson?

“One of the things,” says Goodwin, “was the comprehensive view he took of his duties as a parish priest.” “The Educator of his People” he somewhere gives as the description of the parish priest. Then there was “his zeal in working out his views”; a freshness and originality about him, a semi-Carlylean way of viewing men and things.

It is not saying too much of the influence Myers brought to bear upon Goodwin in that long vacation, to assert that the encouragement he gave the young Cambridge wrangler to take part in the pastoral work of the parish, helped to make him the good and great Bishop of Carlisle he afterwards became.

I have heard Bishop Goodwin speak of the evening lectures he gave at Myers’ wish; of the speech Myers got him to make on the value of education, when, with the poet Wordsworth on his right hand, he opened his parish school. A friend who was present on that occasion told me that nothing could induce the old poet to make a speech; he simply bowed and said, “I agree with every word that Mr. Myers has spoken.”

And what was it brought to this valley, from the flats of Lincolnshire, that gentle, courteous pastor, who broke down barriers between class and class, and, by his humour and pleasantry, won the affection of the sturdy Cumbrian folk? What induced the dreamy mystic, the scholarly fellow of Clare College, to work on here at his ideal of parish life from 1838 to 1851, till, at the age of forty, he passed away, worn out by work, and will to help his kind? It was the beauty of our earthly Paradise; that

sense of being nearer to God, which quiet lakes, and solemn fells, and shining mountain-heads can give.

But other enthusiastic seekers after truth and goodness rise up before our minds as we linger here. For here at No. 3 Derwentwater Place there used to reside for part of the year a delicate man, a poet and thinker. Here the author of *Thorndale* and *Gravenhurst*, the mystic William Smith, met the woman of his choice, and the lonely-natured man found such love and companionship of heart and soul as falls to the lot of few, in the person of Lucy Cumming, the German translator, of true poetic soul.

Lucy Cumming thus describes their meeting: "My beloved mother—at that time a complete invalid—a little niece of mine, who then lived with us, and I, had been spending the early summer in Borrowdale, and we too, attracted by the new and cheerful row of lodging-houses, now took up our abode at 3 Derwentwater Place. The solitary student, to whom I confess I not a little grudged the drawing-room floor, soon sent to proffer one request—that the little girl would not practise her scales, etc., during the morning hours. Now and then we used to pass him in our walks, but he evidently never so much as saw us. There was something quite unusual in the rapt abstraction of his air, the floating lightness of his step; one could not help wondering a little who and what he was, but for several weeks nothing seemed more entirely unlikely than our becoming acquainted.

"The lodging-house that we all occupied was kept

by a mother and two daughters, who had had a reverse of fortune, and to whom this way of life was new. We were their first tenants. One of the daughters especially was well educated and interesting. To her I gave a copy of Grillparzer's 'Sappho,' which I had recently translated. I knew she would value it a little for my sake, but it never occurred to me that she would take it to the recluse in the drawing-room. She did so, however. Piles of manuscript on his desk had convinced her that he was 'an author,' and it amused her to show him the little production of one of the other lodgers; perhaps he may have thought that she did this at my request, perhaps his kindness disposed him to help by a hint or two, some humble literary aspirant, for always he was kind; at all events, the very next day he sent down a message proposing to call, and on the 21st of August there came a knock at our sitting-room door; the rapid entrance of a slight figure, some spell of simplicity and candour in voice and manner that at once gave a sense of freedom; and the give-and-take of easy talk—beginning with comments on the translation in his hand—had already ranged far and wide before he rose, and, lightly bowing, left the room. I thought him absolutely unlike any one I had ever met; singularly pleasant in all he said; even more singularly encouraging and gracious in his way of listening."

William Smith, born at North End, Hammersmith, in 1808, a fair-haired boy with deep black eyes, had gone through the rough and tumble of Radley School-days, and had passed, in company with such lads as John Sterling,

through the mill of a Glasgow University session. And having therein been baptised with the baptism of Metaphysics, he was set on thinking, and found, as old traditional faiths seemed to fall away, or need re-explanation, "a something far more deeply interfused," a spirit of obedience to the nearest duty.

Thenceforth this pure soul, instead of flying from God because he could not understand, fled to Him that he might know Him. He set himself inexorably on the path to find out truth. Thenceforth this solitary man, "decided not to live: but know."

Byron had charmed him, till face to face with the Swiss mountains young William Smith realised that Byron's love of beauty in nature, was but a compensation for want of cordial sympathy with man, and was in no sense "a related feeling, strengthened by, and strengthening that sympathy."

But another poet had arisen: a poet who in directest contrast with the splendid rebellion of Byron taught obedience and reverence, who realised that duty is the stern daughter of the voice of God, and who instead of putting nature on a pedestal apart from God and man, and thus worshipping her, found in the glory of her manifestations the still small voice that spoke both of God and man; detected "in nature a communion and an intelligent influence passing in all ages between the Spirit of the Universe and the heart of man."

Was it then to be marvelled at, that this second Arthur Clough, as he may be called—steeped in the community of thought that such early associates as Maurice,

Sterling, Grove, Lewes and Mill shared—set himself deliberately the life's task "Given self to find God"; was it to be marvelled at, that he whose pain and passion was that he must know, and that definitely, found that the task of jostling in the market place and scrambling for place and fame was impossible, and so gave up his barrister profession, and at the age of forty went into the wilderness, as other prophets before him had gone, to be alone with Nature and with God?

So with the love of thinking for its own sake and with a passionate thirst for Nature and beauty, it was little wonder that Wordsworth-Land claimed him for his own. In 1848, he came to Bowness and there lived the life of a recluse. He was tempted by Christopher North to fill temporarily the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh, but he refused. He was already beginning to think out *Thorndale*. In 1852 he crossed the Raise and settled near his friend till death, Dr. Lietch at Portinscale, and in 1852, 1853, 1854, he pursued "The wistful and perpetual argument." All this time he was writing out his book *Thorndale, or the Conflict of Opinions*, in which Materialist, Theist, Catholic and Evidentialist all obtain an equal hearing and all represent phases of thought through which the writer has himself passed.

But in 1856 the light, pleasant three-windowed room, with peeps of lake and mountain, at 3 Derwentwater Place, then fresh from the hands of a mason-poet, Richardson of St. John's Vale, had an attraction for him which was irresistible: it was near the excellent little library which Myers, aided by his friends the Marshalls, had set on foot.

Thither he came ; there he finished *Thorndale* ; and there, as aforesaid, the dark-eyed solitary found it was not good that man should be alone.

Of his future wife, Miss Cumming, we are told, that she was above the middle height, slender, and carried herself like a queen. Her face delicately oval ; the eyes dark grey, large and intent ; but words cannot convey the sparkle and brilliancy and witchery of her face. They married in 1861—he then fifty-three years of age, she ten years his junior—and settled for the summer at Tent Lodge, Coniston : and what the sweetness of that married life was to him let these few lines witness :

“ O vex me not with needless cry
Of what the world may think or claim,
Let the sweet life pass sweetly by
The same, the same, and every day the same.”

And that sweet life passed sweetly through the summer to the winter which found them again at Keswick, the wife working away at a story, the husband at his *Gravenhurst*.

Gravenhurst, or Thoughts on Good and Evil, came out in the spring of 1862. One barrier to intellectual peace the philosopher had found in the seeming contradiction involved in the existence of evil in a divinely ordered world. In *Gravenhurst*, Smith tried to show how evil may after all find an interpretation in the light of science, as servant of God.

In 1864, the lovers removed to Newton Place in Borrowdale, the little battlemented house among its

larches just to the west of the road that leads by the Borrowdale Hotel. There for part of each year till 1871, they lived and loved and laboured. His pen was never weary. There are no less than 136 articles to his account in *Blackwood's Magazine*, between 1839 and 1871. His last contribution was in July of 1871, and was on the *Coming Race*.

But his days were numbered; decline, which made rapid strides, drove him from Borrowdale to Brighton in December of that year, but doctors availed nothing. His passion for the quiet country still clung round him; the flashing waters of the Derwent, the hooting of the owls, the chiming of the waterfalls,—of these the dying man had need. He would lift up his eyes unto the hills of Borrowdale, those eyes that were so soon to lift no more. “We will go off together to the country,” he said one day to his wife, “have done with medicines and doctors, and there we will solemnly and quietly await the inevitable end, and we will love each other to the last.”

Those were the brave words of a thoughtful man who had in seeking truth found rest unto his soul. “There comes a time,” wrote he, “when neither fear nor hope are necessary to the pious man but the love of righteousness for righteousness sake, and love is all in all. God takes back his little child unto Himself, a little child that has no fear and is all trust.” So the pure heart faced death, and unafraid went home. He died at Brighton on Tuesday, March 26, 1872, but he left behind one whose love, as I read of it, seems passing the love of women.

For nigh ten years she waited and watched with a passionate longing for the doors of heaven to open and the hand of the new life to reunite the hearts whom death had severed. On her tomb might well have been inscribed these words her husband wrote in *Gravenhurst*, "To love is the great glory, the last culture, the highest happiness: to be loved is little in comparison."

Lucy Smith's letters, given in Merriman's story of the life of these two lovers of truth and of each other, are full of tender thought and poetry and appreciation of our lakeland scenery. But what her unpublished correspondence may have been we gather from a working man's lips, who was led to write to her by his admiration of *Thorndale*. He says of her letters to him, "I never opened one that did not afford me means of grace for many a day afterward. I am not irreverent in thought, when I think of her as always manifesting (to me it seems so) the constancy of God, changeless in all sorrow and all joy. We have an impulse toward all good in the very thought of her, as she lived, and wrote, and spoke."

CHAPTER VI

DERWENTWATER AND BASSENTHWAITE SCAFELL AND SKIDDAW

RUSKIN: ROGERS: TURNER: GRAY: KEATS: WORDSWORTH: SOUTHEY:
CARLYLE: THE ARNOLDS AT DERWENTWATER: CARLYLE'S DE-
SCRIPTION OF THE VIEW FROM GREAT GABLE: WILKIN-
SON AND WORDSWORTH'S ASCENT OF SCAFELL:
WATERLOO BONFIRE ON SKIDDAW

Is it nothing as we stand at Friars' Crag with memories of those rough mountaineers, who longing for a higher life would wait here till Herebert, Cuthbert's friend,¹ should come across from yonder island and speak to them of the word of life; with thoughts too, of those monks of St. Anthony, in later time, who ferried pilgrims to St. Herbert's island shrine,—is it nothing to us to remember that here a great preacher of the higher life for our own time, first turned to Nature, his inspirer?

One calls to mind that it was at the "Crag of the Friars" that John Ruskin received one of those impulses

¹ Cf. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, chap. xxix.

to care for the close study of natural form, one of those revelations of the wonders and beauty in natural growth, that made him what he was—a prophet voice to England, bidding us reverence and regard an unsullied landscape and a countryside unmarred for the eye of worker, prayer, and thinker, as a mirror of the mind of God to man.

“This gift of taking pleasure in landscape,” writes Ruskin, “I assuredly possess in a greater degree than most men. . . . The first thing which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friars’ Crag on Derwentwater; the intense joy, mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since.”¹

That was not the only visit that young John Ruskin paid to Friars’ Crag. In his *Ileriad* he describes how he and his companions saw the women of Keswick hard at work washing their linen on the beach, in true Swiss lake-land fashion :

“ And now, having passed thro’ a sun-shading wood,
On a point of rough rocks o’er the waters we stood.
The roots of the fir, of the elm, and the oak,
Through the rock-covering soil they a passage have broke,
And oh, they presented such nets for the toes,
We were always in danger of breaking our nose.”²

This is only the jingling verse of a boy of twelve; but it is clear proof that the boy had an eye, “as practised as a blind man’s touch,” to observe what trees grew, and

¹ *Modern Painters*, Part IV., ch. xvii., sec. 13.

² *Ruskin’s Poems*, *The Ileriad*, “Friars’ Crag.”

how they grew with roots inveterately convolved on Friars' Crag in 1831. That early impression of the wonder of Friars' Crag on Ruskin's boy-mind was not effaced by all the glorious landscape which he studied and loved in other parts of England, or on the Continent. Speaking to a friend a few years ago, who was about to come to take up his abode in Keswick, Ruskin said, "The scene from Friars' Crag is one of the three or four most beautiful views in Europe." "And," he added, "when I first saw Keswick it was a place almost too beautiful to live in."

We can take boat if so it be our pleasure and row with Rogers and Turner on the lake, looking for points of view to illustrate the poem :

" When Evening tinged the lake's ethereal blue,
And her deep shades irregularly threw ;
Their shifting sail dropt gently from the cove,
Down by St. Herbert's consecrated grove ;
Whence erst the chanted hymn, the tapered rite,
Amused the fisher's solitary night " ;¹

or we can go with Wordsworth alone to St. Herbert's Island. There

" Not unmoved
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
The desolate ruin of St. Herbert's cell, " ²

and we may think not only of Herebert but of the Rydal poet

" When he paced
Along the beach of this small isle. " ³

¹ Rogers' *Poems, Pleasures of Memory*, Part II.

² *Inscriptions*: For the spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Isle, Derwentwater, p. 154.

³ *Idem*.

In thought of those two men of God, those two friends who sought God's bosom in one and the same hour, as long ago as the year 687, as we hear "the cataract of Lodore, peal to St. Herbert's orisons," we may catch within the sound, the mellow monotone of Wordsworth murmuring out his memorial poem.

Or if we will, we may join Robert Southey and all his household on picnic bent, to Otterfield Bay, thenceforth to be called Mutton-pie Bay. Southey delighted in these mutton-pie picnics, as an extract from a letter written in 1815 to John Poole by Mrs. Coleridge shows. These outings on the lake were serious matters in Mrs. Coleridge's eyes; in Southey's eyes they could not come too often, or be too long. "Sara," she writes, "is so delicate that I dare not let her study much; indeed she has always had her full share of play, and certainly more pleasure than falls to the lot of most children in general. For Southey chooses to take the children on the water, whenever a party is going from the house, and as this generally lasts all day, and comes pretty often during the summer, they certainly have too much of this sort of thing."¹

Haply steering towards the landing between the Rose-trees and Fawe Park, we may tramp up through the willowy marsh, and sadly neglected pathway, to the track going over Fawe Park Hill, and there may in fancy join William Smith, in earnest conversation upon his characters in *Thorndale* with his old friend and neighbour, Dr. Lietch.

We may then row back to the landing, and go with

¹ From an unpublished letter in possession of Mrs. Sandford.

the boy Ruskin to Castlehead, or, joining in thought such spirits as Dr. Brown, Gray, Southey, Wordsworth, Rogers, William Turner, Jonathan Otley, Keats, Carlyle, and William and Lucy Smith, we may set out for a walk down Borrowdale: Turner will leave us when we have passed Castlehead to strike off for Stable Hills. He thinks he will turn Lord's Island into St. Herbert's for the nonce, and get a better background for his King Henry's Chapel thus. He will go and see.

Southey will almost certainly leave us at Cat Ghyll, to go up to his tryst with Sir Thomas More at the ford under Falcon Crag, and so round home with Dr. Brown by Walla Crag, his favourite walk. Gray is sorely tempted to go with him, for he is full of talk of how his Claude glass "played its part divinely" when he passed this way in 1709, at a spot hard by called Carf-close Reeds, where he says, "The view opening here both ways is the most delicious view my eyes ever beheld."

Jonathan Otley is also tempted to go in at the gate below Falcon Crag, to see how the flowers he has planted at the Fairy-Keld, or at the Spring on Barrow Common, are doing, but he hears that the "Floating Island" is again visible, and he wishes to make some experiments on the earthy gases it contains, so he plods on with us.

That halloo above our heads comes from the quaint old father of the love of scenery in this part, Dr. Brown, who has parted from Southey at Cat Ghyll and climbed to the edge of the towering bastion of Falcon Crag.

One cannot pass along beneath Walla and Falcon Crags without remembering that Dr. Brown, a poet who

wrote worthy verse of the old-fashioned type, and delighted to chronicle the effect of natural scene upon his mind, in prose or poetry, had found inspiration by the view from Walla and Falcon Crag, and by this lake at eventide, had let the deep hush of nightfall sink with rest into his soul. Here is his picture of a quiet night scene in the Vale of Keswick :

“Nor voice nor sound broke o’er the deep scene
But the soft murmur of soft-gushing rills,
Forth-issuing from the mountain’s distant steep,
Unheard till now, and now scarce heard, proclaimed
All things at rest, and imaged the still voice
Of Quiet whispering in the ear of night.”

It gratified Wordsworth, when he was writing his Description of the Scenery of the English Lakes, to quote at greater length from this poem, “as the writer was one of the first who led the way to a worthy admiration of this country.”

No one who has read Dr. Brown’s *Description of Keswick*, republished in *West’s Guide to the Lakes*, can fail to remember the enthusiasm with which he describes the lake and vale that in its full perfection of grace seemed to him to unite “beauty, horror, and immensity,” and that needed the “united powers of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin” to do it full justice. Nor will he ever forget how the writer, speaking of the view from Walla and Falcon Crag, says, “I will now carry you to the top of a cliff where, if you dare approach the ridge, a new scene of astonishment presents itself, where the valley, lake, and islands seem lying at your feet, and

where this expanse of water appears diminished to a little pool, amidst the vast immeasurable objects that surround it; for here the summits of more distant hills appear beyond those you had already seen, rising behind each other in successive ranges; and azure groups of craggy and broken steeps form an immense and awful picture, which can only be expressed by the image of a tempestuous sea of mountains."

Just at the gate of the road that leads up to Ashness, we meet a striking-looking, dark-eyed man, with an air of command about him; along with him are an author-friend, two sons, and a young daughter, all remarkable in appearance; but the little girl looks tired, for she has come over Armboth Fell, through noontide sun and heather, at the ending of July.

The elder man is Dr. Arnold. That boy with the curling mass of hair is a poet, Matthew, and if we passed this gate ten years later, we should find him here again with his favourite sister, and know how well he remembered that hot fierce trudge across the fells, which suggested the two opening lines in his beautiful poem, *Resignation*.

"To die be given us, or attain!
Fierce work it were to do again."¹

To-day if, in imagination, we turn up the hill with these two, the brother and sister Arnold, these "ghosts of that boisterous company," we shall find the stream they saw which

"Shines near its head,
In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed,"²

¹ *Arnold's Poetical Works, Resignation.*

² *Idem.*

up there at Ashness bridge,

“ Whence the eye first sees, far down,
Capp’d with faint smoke, the noisy town.”¹

But though we would fain sit down with the poet and his sister,

“ And again unroll,
Though slowly, the familiar whole,”²

of that first Armboth walk in 1833, when the Arnolds were young, and the Doctor was still with them, we feel we must join our own ghostly company, and move on towards Lodore. There, while Jonathan Otley pushes off in his boat with his testing rod to the “ Floating Island,” Keats will scramble up the waterfall, Wordsworth will stay by the lake side and murmur out his lines :

“ Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore” ;³

or else maybe will repeat the *Lines on the Floating Island* his “ dear, dear sister ” wrote, just before the sad giving way of her mind ; or else, pausing at one of the grandest views of Skiddaw that we have, he may mouth out in his own peculiar way, that splendid sonnet to *Our British Hill* which commences

“ Pelion and Ossa flourish side by side.”

There is some banter between Carlyle and Wordsworth, perhaps about that jingle of “ Robert the bard’s,” “ How does the water come down at Lodore.” “ It’s not an English poet’s work at all, but just a jingle about a Scotch waterfall,” says the Chelsea sage. “ Do

¹ *Arnold’s Poetical Works, Resignation.*

² *Idem.*

³ *An Evening Walk, p. 4.*

you not remember how Sam Rogers used to tell, that Porson was never weary of quoting Garnett's lines on the Falls of Lanark?"

Back comes Keats and what says he of the Fall? "I had an easy climb among the streams, about the fragments of rocks, and should have got I think to the summit, but unfortunately I was damped by slipping one leg into a squashy hole. There is no great body of water, but the accompaniment is delightful; for it oozes out from a cleft in perpendicular rocks all fledged with ash and other beautiful trees."¹

Who knows? that view of the Lodore rocks may have been in mind, when afterwards Keats in his Ode to Psyche wrote:

"Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees,
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep."

And now we trudge on with Wordsworth and with Carlyle smoking infinity of tobacco, and with Gray the pale worn man, and the almost as delicate-looking William Smith, to Grange. As we pass on, Gray evidently begins to be a trifle nervous; he will hereafter recall the walk at this point and write, "The crags now begin to impend terribly over your way"; and hanging loose and nodding forward, "seem just starting from their base in shivers." He will tell us that the scene reminded him of "those passes in the Alps, where the guides tell you to move on with speed, and say nothing, lest the agitation of the air should loosen the snows above.

¹ *Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Sidney Colvin, p. 115. Macmillan, 1891.

I took their counsel here," says Gray, "and hastened on in silence."¹

We are soon at the point where we get the delightful view of Grange, with its water flashing and winking under the bridge; its picturesque cluster of buildings upon the ice-worn boulder on the western bank—less picturesque to-day, because so many of the old Scotch firs have fallen—and its great shining height of Maiden Mawr, the mountain of the "big camp," rising up like a vast wall of moss-agate behind it. Smith's eyes are not on Maiden Mawr, but on the river Derwent at our feet. The mosses in the stream, the reflection of the stakes in the water, the wonderful double glow of sunlight and of sound; these, as readers of his book will know, are what he cares about.

As for Gray he is an hungered, and he will go no further than that old farm house, the other side of the bridge, to eat his oaten cake and butter, and drink his bowl of milk or glass of home-brewed ale, and listen to "the civil young farmer," fresh from his oatfield harvest, as he tells how all the dale was up in arms last year for loss of their lambs, and shouted and hallooed from the crags above the eagle's nest and helped him to swing by the rope, from the cliff on to the ledge where the nest was, to avenge himself and the valley flocks upon the birds of Jove, "which flew screaming round, but did not dare to attack him."²

¹ Cf. *Works of Thomas Gray*, ed. by E. Gosse. *Journal in the Lakes*. Vol. I., pp. 255-256.

² *Idem*, p. 257.

Smith turns back to Newton Place to go on with his *Gravenhurst*; still forward plod Wordsworth and Carlyle, and we with them. Far up the vale of Borrowdale we go, tracking the stream "from Glaramara's inmost caves" on by what Gray called "the dreadful road that led through that ancient kingdom of the mountaineers, the reign of Chaos and old Night."

And here we are at last beneath the shadow of the yews—

"Those fraternal Four of Borrowdale
 Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;

 Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,"¹

strange trysting has been held, and underneath

"Whose sable roof
 Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
 With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
 May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
 Silence and Foresight;—Death the Skeleton
 And Time the Shadow;—there to celebrate
 As in a natural temple scattered o'er
 With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
 United worship."²

Wordsworth will linger here to make and mould his grandly tragic lines; and right glad are we that he saw it before that memorable storm of 1888, which blasted irrecoverably that

"Living thing
 Produced too slowly ever to decay.
 Of form and aspect too magnificent
 To be destroyed."³

¹ *Yew Trees*, p. 187.

² *Idem.*

³ *Idem.*

We leave him with his ghostly company "to lie and listen to the mountain flood"; and up by Seathwaite farm we go, with the seer of Ecclefechan, to climb by Styhead Pass to the Great Gavel's utmost peak.

I should not have been surprised if a certain sage of Greenwich had joined the sage of Chelsea, in this Great Gavel climb. For the Astronomer Royal is determined for observation purposes to have the Maen or Man, the pile of stones erected by the officers of the Ordnance Survey, "shifted ten feet to the Magnetic west," and he is anxious also to have some damage to the natural rock cistern at the top of the "Gavel" repaired, which that old well-hunter, Jonathan Otley, began to be interested in as long ago as 1812.

But I expect Sir George Airy and Thomas Carlyle had little converse with one another if they met, and perhaps they never met on the Gavel at all. For what impressed Carlyle about his climb the day he was there, was, that man and Nature had a common heart, were one in the silence and the solitude, one in the murmur of eternity which, on the solemn mountain heights, may be heard.

This is Carlyle's account of the view from Great Gavel as given us in *Sartor Resartus*:

"A hundred and a hundred savage peaks, like giant spirits of the wilderness; there in their silence, in their solitude, even as on the night when Noah's Deluge first dried. Beautiful, nay solemn, was the sudden aspect to our Wanderer. He gazed over those stupendous masses with wonder, almost with longing desire; never till this

hour had he known Nature, that she was One, that she was his Mother and divine. . . . a murmur of Eternity and Immensity, of Death and of Life, stole through his soul; and he felt as if Death and Life were one; as if the Earth were not dead, as if the Spirit of the Earth had its throne in that splendour, and his own spirit were therewith holding communion.”¹ Such was Carlyle’s thought as he stood alone on Great Gavel; other minds have been impressed much in the same way, when in solitary communion with the spirit of the place, they have

“Felt the sentiment of Being spread
O’er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O’er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart.”²

This is how the view from Scafell Pike impressed Wilkinson of Yanwath, Wordsworth’s thoughtful Quaker friend. “There is,” said he, “a solemn silence on the summits of the mountains that I have not found on the plain or in the valleys. The air is still, the earth seems at rest, the sound of water is not heard. The voice of man, the notes of birds, and the noise of beasts, do not reach these serene regions. Can I withhold thanksgiving and gratitude from Him who brought messages of love and of mercy from the bosom of his Father? May I not here in deep silence worship Jehovah?”³

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. II., chap. vi.

² *Prelude*, Bk. II., p. 248.

³ *Tours to the British Mountains, with Poems of Lowther and Eamont Vale*. 1824. pp. 229, 230.

If to-day, leaving Carlyle on Great Gavel, we clamber to companionship with Thomas Wilkinson on Scafell Pike, we may chance to find Wordsworth has left his rest beneath the shadow of the Fraternal Four, and clomb thither also. He too is impressed with the deep silence. Here is a description of his visit to the Scafell Pikes, "a point of view" to which he supposed at that time of day "few were likely to ascend." "The stillness seemed to be not of this world; we paused, and kept silence to listen; and no sound could be heard. The Scafell Cataracts were voiceless to us; and there was not an insect to hum in the air. The vales which we had seen from Ash Course lay yet in view: and, side by side with Eskdale, we now saw the sister vale of Donnerdale, terminated by the Duddon Sands.

"But the majesty of the mountains below and close to us is not to be conceived. We now beheld the whole mass of the Great Gavel from its base—the Den of Wastdale at our feet, a gulph immeasurable—Grasmire, and the other mountains of Crummock—Ennerdale and its mountains, and the sea beyond." ¹

We can stand with Wilkinson and Wordsworth, and feel the same awful silence sink into our souls, and know the same majesty of mountains. We can note, as Wordsworth noted, that here "round the top of Scawfell Pike not a blade of grass is to be seen. Stones and tufts of moss, parched and brown, appear between the huge blocks and stones that lie in heaps on all sides to a great distance,

¹ *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*. Knight's Edition. *Guide to The Lakes*. Vol. VIII., p. 283.

like skeletons and bones of the earth not needed in creation, and there left to be covered with never dying lichens, which the clouds and dews nourish and adorn with colours of vivid and exquisite beauty. Flowers, the most brilliant feathers, and even gems, scarcely surpass in colouring some of those masses of stone which no human eye beholds, except the shepherd or traveller be led thither by curiosity." And we, in this day of mountain climbers, are fain to smile at his next sentence, "and how seldom must this happen."

But it may well be that never shall we witness such storm-grandeur as was Wordsworth's lot to witness when, having climbed hither on a still autumn day, he was bade by his shepherd guide to linger, for a storm was coming. "We looked in vain to espy the signs of it. Mountains, vales, and sea were touched by the clear light of the sun. 'It is there,' said he, pointing to the sea beyond Whitehaven, and there we perceived a light vapour, unnoticeable but by a shepherd accustomed to watch all mountain boding. We gazed around again, and yet again, unwilling to lose the remembrance of what lay before us in that lofty solitude, and then prepared to depart. Meanwhile the air changed to cold, and we saw that tiny vapour swelled into mighty masses of cloud, which came boiling over the mountains; Great Gavel, Helvellyn, and Skiddaw were wrapped in storm, yet Langdale and the mountains in that quarter remained all bright in sunshine. Soon the storm reached us; we sheltered under a crag, and almost as rapidly as it had come it had passed away, and left us free to observe the struggles of

gloom and sunshine in other quarters. Langdale now had its share, and the Pikes of Langdale were decorated by two splendid rainbows. Skiddaw also had his own rainbow: before we again reached Ash Course, every cloud had vanished from every summit."¹ We turn to descend, happier that such eyes and hearts have been before us on this Scafell Pike, glad for the associations gathered round its silent, solitary peak.

Such is the company of chosen spirits with whom the wanderer up Borrowdale and the mountains in its vicinity, may move; but if we desire to make the compass of Bassenthwaite, or climb Skiddaw, we may have choice of companions there also. We may, for example, join the gallant Mrs. Radcliffe, who rode over Skiddaw in 1794, and left behind her such an account of the terrible danger and difficulty of making this, apparently, the first ascent, by womankind, of our tremendous mountain, as would lead one to believe that, at anyrate in her mind, the feat was equal to a climb up Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Kiliman-garo, or the Mountains of the Moon.

Derwentwater, from the height to which this good dame ascended, dwindled, she says, to the smallness of a point. "The air became very thin" and "difficult to be inspired." It was in sooth only by special providence and the extreme care of her guide that Mrs. Radcliffe, who had gained the summit by a way "dreadfully sublime," ever returned from that awful wilderness, those tremendous wilds; ever, in short, reached the valley alive.

¹ *Wordsworth's Description of the Scenery at the Lakes*, Fourth Edition, p. 115.

We can, if we will, ascend on foot our cloven mountain, or mountain of the horns—"Skidda" as the shepherds call it—with Charles and Mary Lamb, in 1802, or with Keats in 1812.

If we go with either, when we have reached the Gale and got as far as Hawell's cross, we shall inevitably turn out of our way to the Ghyll that gives the Keswick folk their water, and quaff, as they too quaffed, a cup of clear crystal in their honour. Keats writes, June 29, 1818: "We went to bed rather fatigued, but not so much so as to hinder us getting up this morning to mount Skiddaw."¹ One does not much wonder at the fatigue, for he had walked from Wytheburn to Keswick before breakfast, and made the circuit of Derwentwater, and then, after ordering dinner, had fagged up hill to the Druid Circle.

But up Skiddaw he started next morning with peep of day. "It grew colder and colder," says he, "as we ascended, and we were glad, at about three parts of the way, to taste a little rum which the guide brought with him, mixed, mind ye, with Mountain water. I took two glasses going, and one returning . . . all felt, on arising into the cold air, that same elevation which a cold bath gives one—I felt as if I were going to a Tournament."²

But for a bit of real fun I think I should have been inclined to go with Keats, along under Skiddaw, by the side of Bassenthwaite, *en route* for Carlisle to Ireby, where he was greatly amused to see "a dancing school holden

¹ *Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Sidney Colvin, p. 115.

² *Idem*.

at the Sun . . . they kickit and jumpit with mettle extraordinary, and whiskit and friskit, and toed it and go'd it, and twirl'd it and whirl'd it, and stamped it, and sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad. . . . There was as fine a row of boys and girls as you ever saw; some beautiful faces, and one exquisite mouth."¹

So vigorously danced was the grand old Cumberland three-cornered and eight reel, on that day in the Ireby Inn, that Keats could only compare "the difference between our country dances and these Scottish figures," with the difference between "stirring a cup o' tea and beating up a batter-pudding."²

"I never felt," he writes, "so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery."³

It is pleasant to hope that the revival of some of these old dancing days in our midst may have a latent power to keep us patriots. We need a happier England, and that speedily; ay, and a country life filled far more full of joy.

We can have Gray the poet too, with us, as we stroll along the road above Bassenthwaite. He made the circuit of that lake in 1769, and was not a little relieved to find that, though the road was then only in some parts made, and was a dangerous cart road, there were no precipices.

Poor Gray, he little thought as he penned this Lakeland journal that he would so soon be twitted for his timorous

¹ *Letters of John Keats*, ed. by Sidney Colvin, p. 116.

² *Idem.*

³ *Idem*, p. 117.

apprehension of the savage mountains and the impending and terrible cliffs in this neighbourhood ; or that his drive in the “chay” round Bassenthwaite, on October 6, 1769, would have been the subject of criticism. But one reads in Clarke’s *Survey of the Lakes*, which appeared twenty years after, the following : “When Mr. Gray was at Keswick, he was desirous of seeing the back of Skiddaw, and accordingly took chaise to Ouzebidge, thinking to have a view of the precipices by the way. Timidity, however, prevailed over curiosity so far that he no sooner came within sight of those awful rocks than he put up the blinds of his carriage. In this dark situation, trembling every moment lest the mountain should fall and cover him, he travelled to Ouzebidge. He thus avoided seeing, not only the horrors, but the beauties of the place, and therefore (more honestly than most of our authors) gives no description of what he saw.”

Keats went on foot to Ireby, *en route* for Carlisle ; Gray, being a delicate man, went back to Keswick in his “chay,” for “the sky was overcast and the wind cool,” and tells us that he dined at the public house near Ouse-bridge. That public house has long since ceased to exist, but Peter Crosthwaite who surveyed and mapped Broadwater in 1785, that is sixteen years after Gray’s visit, gives us its whereabouts as then existing. And Clarke in his *Survey of the Lakes*, 1789, speaks of it as, “a convenient place to call, as pleasantly situated on the edge of the lake, . . . a very good new building, erected purposely for the convenience of travellers by the late Mr. Spedding of Armathwaite.”

"There is," he adds, "a very good dining-room and parlour with a bow-window, which has a pretty look out, and very good stables. Here, used to be held several meetings every year of the Justices of the Peace, for their private sessions, also county courts. Here also was held the first regatta in 1780, at which there was one species of amusement, not since made use of at those public diversions, viz., a prize to swim horses for." The inn has passed away in whose bow-window sat Gray the poet, and at which the quality assembled to see the new diversions of the first regatta on Bassenthwaite.

Go where we will in the Crosthwaite Vale, it is to Skiddaw and Skiddaw's top we turn our eyes. Beautiful in the hoar frost of October, the silver white of winter, the grey-bleached grassiness of April, the emerald dust of May, the purple of August, the russet of September, this massive mountain head lifts into the blue or wreathes itself in cloud. Never more interesting than when as on some great night of national rejoicing it wears a diadem of fire.

We know something of the glory of seeing old Skiddaw rouse, with its banner of flame, the burghers of Carlisle, for thrice in our generation, on Jubilee night, on the Tercentenary of the Armada, and on the celebration of the marriage of the Duke of York, have we planned and assisted at the building of a pyre on the "girt man," and sent the rockets heavenward from the height. Here is Southey's account of a bonfire after Waterloo, given in a letter to his brother the doctor, under date, Keswick, August 23, 1815:—"Monday, the 21st of August, was not a more remarkable day in your

life than it was in that of my neighbour Skiddaw, who is a much older personage. The weather served for our bonfire, and never, I believe, was such an assemblage upon such a spot. To my utter astonishment, Lord Sunderlin rode up, and Lady S., who had endeavoured to dissuade *me* from going as a thing too dangerous, joined the walking party. Wordsworth with his wife, sister, and eldest boy, came over on purpose. James Boswell arrived that morning at the Sunderlins. Edith, the Senhora, Edith May, and Herbert were my convoy, with our three maid-servants, some of our neighbours, some adventurous lakers, and Messrs. Rag, Tag, and Bobtail, made up the rest of the assembly. We roasted beef and boiled plum-puddings there; sung 'God save the King' round the most furious body of flaming tar-barrels that I ever saw; drank a huge wooden bowl of punch; fired cannon at every health with three times three, and rolled large blazing balls of tow and turpentine down the steep side of the mountain. The effect was grand beyond imagination. We formed a huge circle round the most intense light, and behind us was an immeasurable arch of the most intense darkness, for our bonfire fairly put out the moon.

"The only mishap which occurred will make a famous anecdote in the life of a great poet, if James Boswell, after the example of his father, keepeth a diary of the sayings of remarkable men. When we were craving for the punch, a cry went forth that the kettle had been knocked over, with all the boiling water. Colonel Barker, as Boswell named the Senhora, from

her having had the command on this occasion, immediately instituted a strict inquiry to discover the culprit, from a suspicion that it might have been done in mischief, water, as you know, being a commodity not easily replaced on the summit of Skiddaw. The persons about the fire declared it was one of the gentlemen; they did not know his name, but he had a red cloak on; they pointed him out in the circle. The red cloak (a maroon one of Edith's) identified him; Wordsworth had got hold of it, and was equipped like a Spanish Don—by no means the worst figure in the company. He had committed this fatal *faux pas*, and thought to slink off undiscovered. But as soon as, in my inquiries concerning the punch, I learnt his guilt from the Senhora, I went round to all our party, and communicated the discovery, and getting them about him, I punished him by singing a parody, which they all joined in: "Twas *you* that kicked the kettle down! 'Twas you, Sir, you!"

"The consequences were, that we took all the cold water upon the summit to supply our loss. Our myrmidons and Messrs. Rag and Co. had, therefore, none for their grog; they necessarily drank the rum pure; and you, who are physician to the Middlesex Hospital, are doubtless acquainted with the manner in which alcohol acts upon the nervous system. All our torches were lit at once by this mad company, and our way down the hill was marked by a track of fire, from flambeaux dropping the pitch, tarred ropes, etc. One fellow was so drunk that his companions placed him upon a horse, with his face to the tail, to bring him

down, themselves being just sober enough to guide and hold him on. Down, however, we all got safely by midnight; and nobody, from the old lord of seventy-seven to my son Herbert, is the worse for the toil of the day, though we were eight hours from the time we set out till we reached home.”¹

We may regret, for that poor drunken fellow's sake, that Wordsworth kicked the kettle over. But we perhaps hardly can realise the excitement, nay, the intoxication of joy, that took on all forms of festal inebriety when the Great Duke had been the victor's victor upon the plain of Waterloo.

But there were those who wept bitter tears even on that festive occasion. Poor little Sara Coleridge was not considered strong enough to ascend the mountain, and there was another who was much disappointed, Derwent Coleridge, who came over from school at Ambleside, but arrived too late to join the bonfire party. This is Mrs. Coleridge's account of the day as she wrote it for Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey:

“Have you heard, my dear Sir, of the rejoicings we have had on the top of our great mountain Skiddaw; most likely you have seen an account of it in the papers, of a *bonfire* to celebrate the victories, upon the highest summit of that high mountain. Wordsworth and Southey and their families ascended, besides a very large party of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were Lord and Lady Sunderlin, the former seventy-six and the latter upwards of sixty years old.

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. IV., p. 121.

“Sir G. Beaumont had imprudently walked to the summit in the morning so could not go at night, so he with his lady and the Misses Malone with a great many others were content to view the sight from our windows, and a splendid thing it was to behold ; and seeing the company descend by the light of torches had a most uncommon and beautiful effect ; they reached the vale at half-past twelve, at midnight, after which we sent up a fire-balloon and a number of small fireworks. All Mr. Dawes’s boys came over from Ambleside, but not in time enough to ascend the hill, which vexed poor Derwent much, so that no one of our name was there, for I am not equal to a walk of ten miles mountain road, and Sara is much too delicate to be permitted such a thing. She saw her cousins Edith and Herbert set out, with tears in her eyes, protesting that she could perform the thing with the greatest ease, but all set a face against her attempting it. I had a very anxious time during the nine hours of their absence, for I feared lest the mists should come on and so keep them on the heights all night ; but not a cloud came to distress them, and not one of the party were any worse for the expedition. On the following week we had illuminations, transparencies, and a balloon at Ld. S.’s on the other side the lake, with elegant refreshments and a great deal of good company. We took all the dear children, and on these occasions his Lordship always sends his carriage to fetch and carry us home.”¹

¹ Cf. *Thomas Poole and his Friends*, by Mrs. H. Sandford, Vol. II., p. 251.

CHAPTER VII

MIREHOUSE

TENNYSON'S VISITS TO MIREHOUSE: TENNYSON AND THE
SPEDDINGS: CARLYLE AT MIREHOUSE

ENGLAND now is Laureateless; and in the land that gave us Laureates from 1813 to 1850, we cannot but go back to one who took the

“laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base,”¹

and remind ourselves that Alfred, Lord Tennyson also knew the beauties of our Keswick Vale.

It is by a coincidence that Alfred Tennyson, our first poet-baron, came to the Lake District in the year that Sir Robert Peel offered a baronetcy to the then Laureate, Robert Southey; an offer which was gratefully and wisely declined on the ground of his limited income and inability to bequeath anything of substance that could keep up the title.

¹ *To the Queen.*

In that year, 1835, arrived two young College friends, Alfred Tennyson and "Old Fitz"—as the translator of *Omar Khayyám* used to be called at Cambridge—to stay with James Spedding the Baconian, at Mirehouse, upon Bassenthwaite.

There in April with the daffodils "breaking about the door" did they wander out into the park, and perhaps on moonlight nights beside the mere, would push off from the shore and hear "the ripple washing in the reeds."¹

"Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought,"²
they think they see Excalibur,

"The sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,"³

brighten to the moon. Or, standing on the "dark strait" of wooded land there, by "a broken chancel with a broken cross"⁴ of the old parish church, they may have felt, as the lake waters rolled out into the haze and broadened up the Vale, that

"On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full."⁵

Yea, and in dreams there at Mirehouse the poet and his friend may have seemed

"To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point";⁶

for *Morte D'Arthur* was the poem which was then in manuscript. And whilst "Old Fitz" played chess at night with Spedding's mother, Tennyson and young James Spedding would retire to meditate upon the poem line by line. Fitz-

¹ *Passing of Arthur.*

² *Idem.*

³ *Coming of Arthur.*

⁴ *Morte D'Arthur.*

⁵ *Idem.*

⁶ *Idem.*

gerald, who tells us of this "conning over of the *Morte D'Arthur* and *Lord of Burleigh*" till late hours of the night, never forgot that happy April and May at Mirehouse, and the impression made upon him then of Alfred Tennyson's greatness.

Old Mr. Spedding could scarcely understand what all this waste of time was about. "Well, Mr. Fitzgerald," he would say, "and what is it? Mr. Tennyson reads, and Jem criticises, is that it?" But had he been alive with us to-day, he would be proud to think how much his talented thoughtful son had added to the finish, almost "faultily faultless," of that marvellous poem, *Morte D'Arthur*.

We cannot learn that Wordsworth or Southey—though in that year, 1835, there was much inter-communication between the Rydal and Greta Hall houses—ever saw the poets or heard of Tennyson's visit to the Lakes.

Wordsworth met Tennyson first at Moxon's in 1843, but I have enough faith in Wordsworth's critical judgment and Southey's swift perception of character to believe that had they joined the Mirehouse symposium, and heard *Morte D'Arthur* and the *Lord of Burleigh*, they would have agreed in the judgment Wordsworth afterwards expressed to Professor Reed on the poems that appeared in 1842, that here they had found one who would be, nay was, "decidedly the first of our living poets." And they would have been glad enough then to crown with the bay those twenty-six-year-old brows that one day should wear it, and which, in the opinion of some who busied themselves to bring it about, should have worn it in place of Wordsworth, at Southey's decease.

Perhaps, had he been living to-day, Wordsworth would have told us that he had modified the opinion he then expressed of Tennyson, viz., that he was not much in sympathy with what he most valued in his own attempts, "the spirituality with which he had endeavoured to invest the material universe, and the moral relations under which he had wished to accept its most ordinary appearance!"

Here in 1850 Tennyson comes, a newly wedded man, and changes the view of "Thames below the gates"—of Shiplake Vicarage, which he has so graphically described as

"Thames along its silent level
Streaming thro' the osiered eyots,"

for the curves and coils of Greta, and the flashing of Derwent—Derwent rolling its might of waters through the willowless plain and scanty alders of Crosthwaite valley, on from lake to lake. He comes hither now as the author of *In Memoriam*, intended for private circulation but given to the public in the early spring of this same happy marriage year.

It is to a Laureateless land that he comes. Wordsworth has died on the 23rd of April at Rydal Mount, and though it is getting on to the eventful 17th of November, no Laureate has yet been appointed.

Had we been standing, in October of that year, 1850, at Miss Robson the milliner's humble little door in Keswick, just where Greenhow's shop stands out so conspicuously beside the Queen's Hotel, I think we should have seen a very remarkable looking pair of lovers issuing from the house. What did they look

like? Thomas Carlyle, a friend, and for the past eight years a keen critic, who, in 1842, wrote, "Alfred Tennyson alone of this time has proved singing in our curt English language to be possible in some measure," was climbing our Cumbrian hills in that same autumn. "Mrs. Tennyson," says Carlyle, "lights up bright glittering blue eyes when you speak to her, has wit; has sense:"¹ (those blue-grey eyes she got from the Franklin stock down in Lincolnshire); she seems frail and delicate, but her carriage is that of a queen.

The fine gipsy-looking man at her side, half-hidden by his great sombrero hat and the clouds of tobacco rolling from his pipe, has, so Carlyle tells us, "a great shock of rough dusty dark hair, bright laughing hazel eyes, massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate, of sallow brown complexion almost Indian-looking, clothes cynically loose, free and easy. His voice musically metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail and all that may lie between."

Up comes an open carriage, and while the lady is having a talk in the little gossip-shop of that day, the handsome gipsy-looking man hears that this is the Mirehouse carriage. The lady, who is Miss Spedding, returns, and at once the shaggy stranger bows, and makes tender inquiry after his bosom friend, James Spedding, and evidently knows and loves Mirehouse so well, that in a trice it is arranged for him and his wife to take seats in the carriage, and go out to Mirehouse to pay a call. This, too, not without relief to Miss Robson,

¹ Froude's *Carlyle*, "Life in London," Vol. II., p. 61.

who, as I have been told, "thought the poet rather a formidable person for her little lodgings, but was charmed with Mrs. Tennyson, she was so sweet and gentle."

Much talk have they on the way, but never once does the stranger lend a clue as to his connection with the Mirehouse friends he seems to know so intimately, and for nigh upon four miles the lady of the carriage is kept in wonder as to who this "fine featured, dim-eyed, bronze-coloured, shaggy-headed man is; dusty, smoking, free and easy."

It is not till the gates are reached, that he says with a grim humour, "I am Alfred Tennyson, James' friend, and this, Madam, is my wife." There was no little flutter at Mirehouse that day, for, as I have heard from one who was then a little girl, Mr. Tom Spedding, the elder, was in delicate health, and it was a rare event for sudden visitors to come to the house.

But the visit of that afternoon meant a stay. Nothing would serve but that the chance callers should be guests. I have been told how those mild days of softest autumn sunshine went happily and memorably by; how in the morning Tennyson swam, as Carlyle would say, outwardly and inwardly with great composure, in an inarticulate element of tranquil chaos and tobacco smoke; how John Spedding would take the happy lovers on the lake in the "all-golden afternoons"; and how the young children would go off to bed not willingly, knowing that when they had retired the poet would read aloud in his sonorous chant, some of his latest published poem, *In Memoriam*.

This was the last visit that Tennyson paid to Keswick, for though he came again to Westmoreland four or five years later, and saw the long lights shake across the Coniston Lake from Tent Lodge, and heard from far up the Tilberthwaite Gorge "the quarry thunders flap from left to right," he never more saw our Cumbrian cataracts at "the Dash," or "at Lodore," "leap in glory," never so far as can be ascertained, crossed the Dunmail Raise again.

But as long as Tennyson is read, there will be read that touching poem which links him to the Speddings of our vale. A poem written to J. S. embalms the memory of a younger brother, Edward Spedding, and at the same time reminds us that Tennyson himself was already a man of sorrow, and had felt the "curse of Time, the grief of orphanhood."

"Alas !

In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;
One went, who never hath return'd.

"He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been."¹

.
"I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honour, and his living worth ;
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth."

Pure and just he was, and noble-minded also, for the poet continues :

¹ Dr. Tennyson had died in the March of 1831, so this gives us Edward Spedding's death as having occurred in 1833.

“ I will not say, ‘ God’s ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind,’
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

“ I wrote I know not what. In truth
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say :

“ For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

“ Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll ”;

and so he concludes his poem with a verse which all who stood by the Laureate’s grave, in October of 1892, in Westminster Abbey, may repeat with a full heart, not only for Edward Spedding, but for the Singer himself, who called him friend :

“ Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet,
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still dry dust, secure of change.”¹

Others than Tennyson have helped to make Mirehouse famous. In June, 1818, Carlyle writes to his friend, James Johnstone, “ Your project of a tour to the Cumberland Lakes meets my mind exactly. Get matters arranged and I shall gladly accompany you to Keswick,

¹ *To J. S.*

or Ulleswater, or wheresoever you please.”¹ Carlyle must have visited at Mirehouse at that time, for in a note to a letter of Mrs. Carlyle, in the summer of 1865, he writes, “Before this I had been at Keswick with my valued old friend, T. Spedding, walked to Bassenthwaite Ha’s (seen five and forty years ago, and not recognisable).”² Of this visit Mr. Froude, Carlyle’s biographer, speaks thus: “After her birthday”—Mrs. Carlyle’s, 14th July, 1865—“he paid a visit to his old friend, Mr. Spedding, at Mirehouse, near Keswick. Spedding himself (elder brother of James, the editor of *Bacon*) he thought one of the best men he had ever known. There were three ‘beautiful young ladies,’ Mr. Spedding’s daughters. Mirehouse was beautiful, and so were the ways of it; ‘everything nice and neat, dairy, cookery, lodging rooms.’ *Simplex munditiis* the real title of it, not to speak of Skiddaw, and the finest mountains of the earth.”³ He must have enjoyed himself indeed when he could praise so heartily. “My three days at Keswick,” he said when they were over, “are as a small polished flagstone, which I am not sorry to have intercalated in the rough floor of boulders, which my sojourn otherwise has been in these parts.”⁴

Happy Mirehouse to have thus been able to minister to pleasure of philosopher and poet! Happier for having set, as it did set in its day, a noble example of simple ways and high thought, of unostentatious hospitality and

¹ *Carlyle’s Early Letters*, ed. by C. E. Norton, Vol. I., p. 159.

² *Idem*.

³ Froude’s *Carlyle*, “Life in London,” Vol. II., p. 290.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 291.

duty to rich and poor alike, and earned so well, a title so honourable as *simplex munditiis*. It is not to be wondered at that Carlyle's memories of this visit to Mirehouse were happy. He was always so completely at home with his friend, Mr. Spedding.

There was about the owner of Mirehouse a clear common sense, a calmness of judgment, a width of sympathy, and an abiding sense of humour which made him specially attractive to a man of swifter impulse. It is true that Mr. Spedding, beyond certain articles from time to time in the reviews, wrote little ; but he was a great reader, and his literary instinct was undoubted. Thus it came about that when James Martineau, with Gray and others, were thinking of starting the *National Review*, the man to whom they turned for counsel was Tom Spedding.

Years ago, when he and his brother James were younger men in chambers in London, some choice article from Carlyle's pen had come before them. They ascertained where Carlyle was living, and without more ado went straight to Craigenputtock, and so began a life-long friendship with the Northern Seer. "Tom Spedding," Carlyle used to say, "is the only man who really understands me," and certain it is that there existed between these two a bond of friendship which admitted of fullest criticism of each other, and grew strong beneath the strain.

As to that last visit to Mirehouse in 1865, one who was a fellow-guest at the time, and who companioned Carlyle thither from Scotland, has described to me how the spirits of the man, worn out and jaded with his just completed *Frederick the Great*, came again to him,

as, long clay pipe in hand, he strolled about the garden and the lawn, and into the stables, and up to the farm, talking for all the world as gravely and philosophically to the cow-boy as he would have done to the master of the house.

"That book's just been the death of me," he would sigh. Then he would walk languidly about, till languor and the book were forgotten in some hearty story, or some bit of passing criticism on men and things.

On one occasion during this visit Carlyle went into one of the library recesses, and found himself confronted with a print of himself as he had appeared when a young man. "What creature is this," said the sage; "oh, it's my own print; I'm glad to make its acquaintance again." Mr. Spedding came up, and as Carlyle read the inscription beneath it, "From your most obedient servant," he cried out, "What an infernal story; you were never anybody's obedient servant yet, Carlyle," and there was a hearty laugh.

On another occasion the talk turned upon funerals, and Carlyle, oblivious of the fact that a young Scotch minister was of the company, drew an English bow at a venture, and described a Scotch funeral as being in its absolute simplicity and absence of all religious service at the grave side, far more consonant with the dignity and proper feeling of the occasion, than the Church of England service ever could be.

The Scotch minister interjected, "But, Mr. Carlyle, we have prayer at the grave side in Scotland." "Na, na, man," said Carlyle, and still would have it that

his version was the correct one. "But," interposed Mr. Spedding, "we feel that our English Church service is full of consolation and help at such a time. We would not for all the world be without either the service in church or the prayers at the grave side." "Na, na," replied Carlyle, "I tell ye at such times silence is best."

There are those who would fain have that library filled again with the voices of old time. Tennyson's deep-chested tones, Fitzgerald's laugh, Monckton Milnes' wit, Carlyle's strong Northern brogue, James Spedding's dignified speech, and Tom Spedding's humour. For these the silence is not best.

It would be ungracious to the literary associations of the neighbourhood, to pass from Keswick without a remembrance of how that old Crosthwaite Vicarage, whose ivy-swathed walls upon its terrace-garden height are well-nigh hid from view by its screen of limes, was the birthplace of Mrs. Lynn Linton.

All who wish to know of her memories of Crosthwaite in the olden time will read her autobiographical sketch in *Christopher Kirkland*, but it is sad enough reading. That she, the youngest of the children, motherless at the age of five months, should have been left to the mercy of a set of passionate boys, who, as she grew up, teased her, and bullied her till she became as furious as a little wild beast; and to the tender care of a father, who "believed in Solomon and the rod, and put religious correction as well as muscular energy into his stripes," was bad enough; but when one realises that in her high temper and bravery she was

generally selected to do the necessary apple-stealing, and any bit of family work that would end in disgrace; and was always, failing the detection of the culprit, pitched upon to be made a public example of, one wonders the child grew up with any heart at all.

I never pass by the cupboard beneath the stairs to my study, which is left just as her father knew it, without hearing the sobs of the poor child smarting from the rod in the darkness. "I do not suppose a week passed," she writes, "without one of these memorable outbreaks, with the rod and dark closet under the stairs to follow." Not unfrequently does the figure of the father unmoved by her sobs come before me; and the strange interview of the tyrannical bishop, his father-in-law, with the widowed vicar of Crosthwaite, sounds out of the silence.

"In the name of heaven, Mr. Lynn, what do you mean to do for your children?"

"Sit in the study, my Lord, and smoke my pipe, and commit them to the care of Providence."

But the rough and tumble of those old days when the neighbouring parsons would, like the priest of Uldale, work afield during the week, then go down to the public house for Saturday night, "strip to t' buff," and having floored their men, go home to prepare their sermons for the next morning, puts Vicar Lynn in fair contrast with the clerics of his time. For Vicar Lynn, as all averred, was a gentleman: and then the voice of him,—to hear Vicar Lynn read a lesson in the parish church, was worth coming miles for.

As we read *Christopher Kirkland*, we seem to see how the little dare-devil girl grew up in surroundings which forced her to think and act for herself, drove her for solace to the "huts where poor men lie," and made the woods and hills her daily teachers. Readers of *Lizzie Lorton* will realise what the outcome of this early education in human nature was to the writer of that interesting tale of our country side. And those who take Mrs. Lynn Linton's *Lake Country* in hand, will find with what "inevitable eye" she made the fields and valleys of her beloved home her "never failing friends." Warm-hearted as she was, and is, in much of her writings, the undertone of combative opposition to the conventional, and to things as they are, seems to be a voice that began to find utterance in that vicarage garden of "Eden," as she called it, where all alone she stole apples for her brothers at their bidding, and would not tell; and where first she plucked the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge, and found so few to help, to counsel, or encourage her.

CHAPTER VIII

COCKERMOUTH, BRIDEKIRK, BRIGHAM, PARDSEY CRAG

THE WORDSWORTHS AT COCKERMOUTH: FEARON FALLOWS:

TICKELL: SIR JOSEPH WILLIAMSON: ABRAHAM FLETCHER:

JOHN DALTON: ELIHU ROBINSON: FOX AND THE

EARLY QUAKERS

WE take train now and cross the valley towards Braithwaite, and the hills of Barf and woods of Wythop. We are bent on a visit to the birthplace of our Cumbrian poet, and as we go we pass the resting-place of his brother laureate. There, high up on the Crosthwaite Tower in pleasant summer days, would Robert Southey sit for hours, and "muse o'er flood and fell."

It is worth while keeping a good look out as we pass the Crosthwaite Churchyard for a sight of the pink-grey Shap granite pillar in shape of an early cross, upon the brow of the hill, that marks the grave of one of the most remarkable of our later Carlisle bishops.

There rests Harvey Goodwin, of whom the Latin inscription records that he tired not in defending the faith

of his fathers by his words and writings, "but especially by that book *The Foundations of the Creed*." Upon the affection of this good shepherd of his flock had the fells and dales laid a hold, strong as they did upon that humbler shepherd "Michael." He first learned the joy of scenery in this vale, and coming, as he came, from the flats and fens of Norfolk to our hills, when preparing for his undergraduate course, his mind was marvellously impressed. No wonder that he, whose eyes were constantly lifted to the hills, whence came his aid, should wish when they closed in death, to lie here.

It is true, as Coleridge once wrote to William Godwin, that "mountains and mountain scenery put on their immortal interest, when we have resided among them and learned to understand their language, their written characters and intelligible sounds, and all their eloquence so various, so unwearied." But even the passing traveller, when he speeds across the valley and looks back at old "Skiddhr," may feel impressed by its sense of restful bulk and quiet calm, and may think that this old moraine in the valley where, more than thirteen centuries ago, St. Mungo first planted the cross in sight of Skiddaw, is a fair place for the resting of all mountain shepherds or shepherds of men, that shall have their toil in earth, or their joy in heaven.

Now the train rattles over the Derwent. The shallows and alders of Wordsworth are there to the right; up on the left, near the "Village-of-the-ford-of-the-Parliament" Pord-thing-scales, the Portinscale of our day—there may be seen a grey arched bridge; there was situate one of the

recognised fords for packhorses and travellers who journeyed from Keswick to Whitehaven in the olden days.

That green hill by the river, close upon our right, crowned with its farmhouse and tree-cluster, is the Howe; it was one of the favourite "view points," which Gray the poet spoke of, when we met him at the Moor on Castlerigg. He walked thither, he tells us, "through the meadow and cornfields," on October 5, 1769, and saw "both lakes, and a full view of Skiddaw therefrom."

Now, as we pass beneath the woods of "westernmost Wythop," we gaze across at Mirehouse, with its memories of Carlyle, James Spedding, Tennyson, and Fitzgerald; thence to Cockermouth, and we are aware, as we cross the Cocker, where it streams to meet the Derwent, of a colourless grey town in a hollow cup of the Vale, with a church steeple, white and cold against a grim-looking ruin. That ruin, disfigured by a red-stone brewery beside it, was the Norman stronghold, built by Waldeof, first Baron of Allerdale. Marks, doubtless, of Roman mason-tools may be found upon the honest Brigham grit, of which it was in part built; for much of its great castle-court walls was collected from the remains of the Roman city of Papcastle hard by.

Umfravilles, Multons, Lucies, Percies, and Nevilles, all doughty barons, have held their fortress-keep here. Hither marched Robert Bruce in 1315, and the castle owned his power to subdue; but later, when in 1387 the Earls of Fife and Douglas and Lord Galloway, with 30,000 Scots at their back, came against it, the castle slammed down its portcullis and held its own. It was not the last time

that it proved its strength. In the year 1648 it was garrisoned by Oliver Cromwell's men. And though the Cumberland Royalists laid their guns in the halfmoon battery away there to the south-west on Harrot Hill, the Parliamentarians in possession under Lieutenant Bird read their Bibles and sang their hymns, and kept their powder dry, to such purpose that the castle never fell. Near a century earlier the castle gates had proudly lifted up their heads to give swift welcome to Mary Queen of Scots. She, who on May 16, 1568, stepped ashore at Workington with her sixteen attendants, sorely out of gear, and weary with flight from the disastrous field of Langside, found hospitality within these ancient walls, and what to her mind was of much value, the chance of appearing, as a queen's sister should, in glorious apparel. For here Sir Henry Fletcher, that most good and courteous gentleman, noticing how soiled were the Queen's white silken garments, presented her with thirteen ells of crimson velvet, for more fitting vesture.

But little thought the Queen, that bright May morning, as she passed from Cockermouth's street, out over "the Goat," with almost Royal progress to her prison fate at Carlisle Castle, that she was going by the very spot where, 202 years later, on the 7th of April, 1770, would be born the poet, who should chronicle her ill-fated landing on Cumbria's strand; when,

"Dear to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed!"¹

¹ *Mary Queen of Scots*, p. 713.

We will go down into the main street of the market-town. We will turn to the left, and as we pace along on the right-hand pavement of the street, we shall soon be aware of a substantial two-storied mansion of Jacobean type, solid, square, ugly, but comfortable and roomy, set back from the main street. That was the house to which in 1766, John Wordsworth, a law-agent, just made steward for Sir James Lowther of the manor and forest of Ennerdale, came, a man of twenty-four, bringing with him his young bride Ann Cookson, daughter of the worthy Penrith mercer.

In that house were born five children, Richard, William, Dorothy, John, and Christopher. And if we will but cross the river by the bridge a little further on, and walk back to the smaller foot-bridge, we shall get a fair view not only of the garden with its terrace walk, but of the castle away to the south, and the hills of wood and the soft grassy swell, that rise from the pastoral amphitheatre through which the Derwent runs. We shall be able then, while the clang of the hammer is heard, or the whistle of the factory rings discordantly, or the train roars by in the distance, to think ourselves back into the quieter times of old, to understand how this solemn river of "Derwent winding among grassy holms," when the poet was nursed by its banks "a babe in arms," could bring a hush upon the busy air and

" Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves." ¹

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. I., p. 238.

The river is grey-white beneath grey skies; one can seldom, except on rare days in March, see it beneath the house as "a bright blue river"; but it is worth while to note how accurately the boy described the impressions of his childhood. For Wordsworth must often enough have gone along the "Beckside" or "the Sand," as it is locally called, and so under the castle wall into "the Lands." Just under the north-west tower of the Castle, the Derwent is very deep, and as it swirls out of the Castle Pool or "Ploo," it passes over the shallows of the opposite bank, which are of a blue-grey gravel. The effect of the blue-grey of the water here is very striking. We can well understand how with this shallow in his mind, Wordsworth could describe it, as he did, in *The Prelude*. Nor shall we forget how for us, as for the boy poet, running beneath

"the shadow of those towers
That yet survive, a shattered monument
Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed
Along the margin of our terrace walk."¹

We cannot make out with certainty which is the back-water or millrace that he describes as the bathing-place when he was a boy; but it is in all probability the millrace of the old Goat Mill. Here in this fair river-circled mead, as boys do still, Wordsworth

"Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
Alternate, all a summer's day, or scoured
The sandy fields, leaping through flowery groves
Of yellow ragwort."²

The Prelude, Bk. I., p. 239.

² *Idem*.

Still survive, against the terrace wall at the back of the house beside the river, its privet and rose-hedges. This was the poet's and his sister Dorothy's favourite playground. That hedge, as Wordsworth tells us, was an "impervious shelter" to birds that built there.

We can see the children going shyly day by day to have just one more peep at the sparrow's nest, "dreading, tho' wishing to be near it": we can see them racing round the flower-beds together after the butterfly, though as for Dorothy,

"she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings."¹

We can call to mind the poem he composed in the orchard garden at Town-end years after, as the little terrace garden above the Derwent came to his mind.

"Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!"²

And remembering, as we stand by the terrace walk and gaze up the river to Waldeof's Castle-hold, that sonnet, *An Address from the Spirit of Cockermouth Castle*, we cannot but be struck with the way in which the golden rag-wort and gay-winged butterfly haunted the memory of the boy who left Cockermouth for school at Hawks-head when he was nine, who spent his holidays as often as not at Penrith, where his father resided for part of each year, and who severed his connection with this

¹ *To a Butterfly*, p. 170.

² *Idem*.

old terrace garden for ever, at his father's death in 1784, when he was but a lad of thirteen years old.

To the east, at two miles' distance, we may descry a bald-headed hill with a road leading over its summit, the wind-blown "Hay Hill" or Watch Hill, Beacon Hill perhaps, of the time when the British warriors held their camp at Caer Mote and the Romans flashed their signals from Papcastle to the Castlehill at Keswick. And if we had stood with the boy Wordsworth in the terrace garden, we should have plainly seen another nearer path, that led from the river ford away over the somewhat rocky eminence of "Mickle" or Michael Brows, a footpath not so clearly marked now as in the beginning of the century, but one that still in summer time shows like a drab riband over the shoulder of the hill.

Whichever track it was, that faint pathway line touched the young poet's heart and fired his soul with questioning of the great beyond.

"A disappearing line,
One daily present to my eyes, that crossed
The naked summit of a far-off hill
Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,"¹

laid, so Wordsworth tells us in his thirteenth book of *The Prelude*, a powerful spell upon his fancy,

"Was like an invitation into space
Boundless, or guide into eternity."²

As one looks round the little garden so associated with the poet's and his sister's happy childhood, one may in imagination see too, the

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. XIII., p. 326.

² *Idem*.

“honoured Mother, she who was the heart
And image of all our learnings and our loves,”¹

gathering a bunch of daffodils, with perhaps a bit of “Daphne Mezereon” or sweet-scented “Ribes,” to pin a nosegay to her boy’s breast, because it is near the time for service, and because to-day he is going to say the Catechism in the church, as was customary before Easter.

Sometimes one catches a glance of the wistful face of that mother gazing upon the children at their play from the window above.² For William has a moody violent temper; she has just had to rebuke him for wanting a penny for seeing a woman “do penance in a sheet at the church” and the lad is in a pet. Besides, Mr. Eilbanks, the teacher of the school near the church, has been down and had a talk about William’s moodiness. She feels that William will either be remarkable for good or evil, and he is the only one of her five children about whose future welfare she is anxious.

The mother’s happier forecasting was justified. We can never know how much the spirit of her prayerful, anxious nature, brooding over the boy, was stay and support to the lad, who learned, as he lived on, to control his own temper, and taught indirectly the worth of “self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control” in all he thought and sang.

Let us leave Cockermouth; a prophet is ever without honour in his own country. A few years ago, when they began to build the sepulchre of their prophet here by setting apart a room to be called the Wordsworth Institute,

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. V., p. 266.

² Cf. Knight’s *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 13.

for lectures and literary gatherings, the eldest son of the poet congratulated the movers in the matter, "for," said he, "in my father's time, though he often made the inquiry, he never could learn that a single volume of his poems was either read, or on sale, in the town that gave him birth."

But as we leave, we are reminded that other men of eminence have been born here. Just across the little "Low Sand Lane," as it is called, that separates the early home of the Wordsworths from the buildings opposite, was born in July 4, 1787, in the humble cottage of a handloom weaver, a boy who grew up to be a kind of calculating marvel, to whom arithmetical problems were as easy as the eating of bread and butter. Fearon Fallows, at the age of six, could do such mental arithmetic as the computing of the farthings in six guineas. He worked on at the loom as he grew, learned Latin between the pauses of the work at the treadles, became arithmetic master at Plumbland School, went thence, by means of a scholarship in 1809, to St. John's College, Cambridge, was third wrangler in 1813 (Herschel being first in that year), became lecturer, and moderator, and principal examiner at Cambridge, took orders, and, in 1826, was chosen by the Admiralty to go out to Cape Town to found an observatory.

It will be remembered by some, that the appointment of a Cape Observatory Astronomer was signalled by a hoax that filled the whole astronomical world with laughter. Enough time was allowed to pass to enable Fearon Fallows to have got out to the Cape,

when a pamphlet was published by Murray, whose name was considered guarantee to some extent for its truth. The writer described the making of the huge telescope, and its gigantic glass; described the way it had been shipped and unshipped, and put together at the Cape. It spoke of the expectation of its makers, and of the intense interest with which it was first directed to the moon, and then announced the discovery there of winged men and women. People in this country were really in suspense as to its truth; and in America, a party of learned men believed it to be true. The Man in the Moon was no longer a matter of speculation, and a Cockermouth man had been the discoverer. Suddenly it was noticed that there was no ship afloat which could have held the telescope as described, for the *Great Eastern* had not yet been built. The secret was out—the world of star-gazers had been hoaxed.

There at the Cape, Fearon Fallows lived and laboured with an able partner of his life and life's work, the daughter of his patron, the Rev. H. N. Harvey, vicar of Bridekirk; and it is astounding that, with the imperfect instruments supplied to him, he was able to effect what he did. Alas! work and worry, and a touch of sunstroke, added to an attack of scarlet fever, called him too soon to his rest: he died at his post on the 25th of July, 1831, in the forty-third year of his age.

One never thinks of the brave man, smitten with death, but refusing to leave the observatory before the equinox, without remembering how splendidly his wife helped him. She worked away at the astronomer's art till she was able

to undertake "the circle observations," while he was engaged with "the transit," and, in every way, became his most efficient assistant.

Let us go out of Cockermouth to St. Bridget's Kirk, —Bridekirk of to-day,—and see the quaint church, with its deeply interesting Saxon font, that, as the runic inscription tells us, "Richard wrought, and to such state of beauty brought"; and let us remember that in that font was baptised the vicar's daughter, the little girl who afterwards became the astronomer's right hand in the lonely Cape Town Observatory.

It is not often that the vicar makes the son of his parish clerk his son-in-law; this was a case in point, and worthier son-in-law no vicar ever had. There are those still living in the parish who can call to mind the wavering, quavering voice in which the astronomer's father used to give out the key-note of the psalm that was to be sung, in the primitive, ante-organ days.

The vicarage we are gazing at is not only celebrated for having been one time the home of Fallows' patron; here in 1685 was born Addison's friend, the poet Thomas Tickell. He went at fifteen years old to Queen's College, Oxford, became Fellow there in 1708, and through Addison's interest obtained the post of Under Secretary of State. One does not find in his poems much, if any, local colouring, but one cannot but be interested to note, that in Tickell we see an example of the sort of enthusiasm of regard and personal friendship which the Cumbrian nature, when it does give itself away, is capable of. For here was a mediocre poet, who found in his affection for

Addison the whole source of his inspiration ; and who was moved by the death of Addison to rise out of mediocrity and write to the Earl of Warwick a poem of which Dr. Johnson has said, "Nor is a more sublime or more elegant funeral-poem to be found in the whole compass of the English language."¹

Tickell was not the only State Secretary that was born at Bridekirk. For here in the year 1625 first saw the light Joseph, son of Vicar Williamson, who became a Westminster schoolboy, afterwards a scholar and fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, secretary to Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State at the Restoration, a knight in 1667, and Secretary of State and Privy Councillor in 1674.

It is true that he purchased this post from Lord Arlington for the sum of £6000, as was the fashion in those days ; but he evidently improved the business, for when some years later he resigned it, he got his £6000 back with a £500 as bonus for his goodwill, in addition. In 1677 he was elected President of the Royal Society, and he held the post for three years. He died in 1701 at Rochester. Shrewd, hard-headed, worldly-wise, and keen, as his portrait in Queen's College appears to testify, his manners were affable and his generosity was undoubted. The men who are called to dinner in Hall at Queen's College to the sound of the silver trumpet which Sir Joseph Williamson presented, can never forget that he rebuilt the north side of the old quadrangle at his own charge, and left the College £6000 at his death,

¹ Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. Thomas Tickell.

with plate and books to the value of another £4000. He also founded a mathematical school at Rochester, and made donations of books to St. Bees, while to Bridekirk Church he gave "gilt bibles, and prayer books, and velvet covering, and red linen for the altar, with silver flagons and chalices for the administration of the Holy Communion."

But of his literary efforts little is known. His papers were State papers; and though it is certain that he felt the need of the encouragement of English folk to study modern languages and history, and may, by his advice to Charles II. on this point, almost be called the father of the present diplomatic service, his literary efforts seem to have taken the form of being editor of the "*Times*" of his generation. Williamson knew the power of the press. As editor of the *London Gazette* he was determined to make it the leading paper in England. He got rid of a troublesome rival in the editor of the *Newsbook* by making him retire on a government pension, and absorbed the *Newsbook* in the *London Gazette*. He set on foot a system of Special Correspondents in England and on the Continent, and intercepted the news letters of a rival who was attempting to carry out a like scheme. The "*Times*" editor of his day, though we cannot admire his methods, at least deserves recognition for his indomitable energy, and we leave Bridekirk with a thought of how much our modern daily press may have owed to the enterprise of its humble vicar's son.

Let us return from Bridekirk to Cockermouth, or when we reach Papcastle, the "Derventio" of Roman days, Papcastle, the birthplace in later days of the last

of the race of born "jesters," the crack-brained, witty rhymester, Salathiel Court, let us strike across the field for Broughton, the one-time home of the father of the great Potters of Etruria, the Wedgwoods, they who so befriended at his need, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Whistling Syke, the little, low, dark-looking building on the moor road between Broughton and Dearham, is the house built by the grandfather of Josiah Wedgwood in the year 1708.

One can never think of the name of Wedgwood without feeling that he, and such benefactors as Raisley Calvert and Wynn, deserve a nation's thanks for their assistance to a nation's literature. For whatever gifts Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey gave to England, were only possible by the munificence of such private benefactions as came at a critical time to these young writers, from Wedgwood, Calvert, and Wynn.

Let us not forget that close by, at Little Broughton, was born into a humble tobacco-pipe maker's family, Abraham Fletcher, one of the rare spirits whose genius consists in indomitable perseverance and desire for knowledge.

Abraham Fletcher carried on all his study at night-time, and would retire to a hayloft, to which he ascended by a rope that he could draw up after him, and so secure the quiet and privacy he desired. At the age of thirty this self-taught man became a teacher of mathematics and science, afterwards took up medicine, and was doctor as well as schoolmaster, and left behind him at his death in 1793, a mathematical work, *The Universal*

Measure, which was spoken of at the time as the largest and best collection of mathematical problems, comprised in one volume, that had at that day appeared in the English language.

Thence let us go across the Derwent vale to Brigham. That church of St. Bridget was one time ministered in by John, the poet Wordsworth's son. And many a time did the poet come thither. Just at the place where the Bullgill railway joins the Cockermouth and Whitehaven line, there stands a signal-box. Near there, till the railway ran, bubbled forth a clear well, much trodden round by the hoofs of thirsty cattle. The name of the well, "Nun's Well," "struck by chance" on Wordsworth's "startled ear," and he wrote the sonnet entitled, *Nun's Well, Brigham*, the only poem in which his Protestant soul allowed itself to be beguiled for a moment into the thought of the saintliness of the cheer with which "hooded votaresses" their

"ritual honours to this Fountain paid.

.
Albeit oft the Virgin-mother mild

Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled

Into the shedding of 'too soft a tear.'"¹

But for us a prophet in earlier days than Wordsworth claims our attention here. To this well, in the year 1652, very thirsty and tired from his controversy with Mr. George Larkham,—the independent minister who was keeping the vicarage warm for the evicted vicar, Rickarby, during the Commonwealth usurpation,—came Fox the Quaker, on

¹ *Nun's Well, Brigham*, p. 713.

discourse bent with parson John Wilkinson, in Brigham Steeple house.

Thirsty and weary enough, for Fox's temper had been sorely tried. He had been roughly treated at Millom, where the gentry had hired a boy with a rapier to do him bodily hurt, and he had only escaped capture by walking up and down in the fields all night; and though he had a grand meeting in the Lorton Vale "where the people lay up and down in the open, like people at a 'leaguer,'" and where he had preached for three hours to a church crowded out, he had been sorely withstood by Larkham of Cockermouth and Wilkinson of Brigham, "a preacher of great repute." Fox's Journal is worth quoting at some length, so natural and vivid is the picture that he draws.

"So when I had largely declared the word of life unto them, for about three hours, I walked from amongst the people, and they passed away very well satisfied. Among the rest a professor followed me, praising and commending me; but his words were like a thistle to me. At last I turned about and bid him 'Fear the Lord,' whereupon priest Larkham of Cockermouth (for several priests were got together on the way who came after the meeting was over) said to me, 'Sir, why do you judge so? You must not judge.' But I turned to him and said, 'Friend, dost not thou discern an exhortation from a judgment? I admonished him to fear God; and dost thou say I judge him?' So this priest and I, falling into discourse, I manifested him to be amongst the false prophets and covetous hirelings. And several people being moved to

speaking to him, he and two others of the priests soon got away. When they were gone, John Wilkinson, who was preacher of that parish, and of two other parishes in Cumberland, began to dispute against his own conscience for several hours, till the people generally turned against him; for he thought to have tired me out; but the Lord's power tired him out, and the Lord's truth came over him and them all. Many hundreds were convinced that day, and received the Lord Jesus Christ, and His free teaching, with gladness; of whom some have died in the truth, and many stand faithful witnesses thereof. The soldiers also were convinced, and their wives, and continued with me till First-day.

"On First-day I went to the steeple-house at Cocker-mouth, where priest Larkham lived. When he had done, I began to speak, and the people began to be rude; but the soldiers told them we had broken no law, and they became quiet. Then I turned to the priest, and laid him open among the false prophets and hirelings; at which word the priest went his way and said, 'He calls me hireling,' which was true enough; all the people knew it. Then some of the great men of the town came to me and said, 'Sir, we have no learned men to dispute with you.' I told them I came not to dispute, but to show the way of salvation to them, the way of everlasting life. I declared largely the way of life and truth, and directed them to Christ their teacher, who died for them, and bought them with His blood.

"When I had done I went about two miles to another great steeple-house of John Wilkinson's, called Brigham;

where the people, having been at the other meeting, were mightily affected, and would have put my horse into the steeple-house yard; but I said, 'No, the priest claims that; take him to an inn.' When I came into the steeple-house yard, I saw the people coming in great companies, as to a fair; and abundance were already gathered in the lanes, and about the steeple-house. I was very thirsty and walked about a quarter of a mile to a brook, where I got some water, and refreshed myself."¹

There would be no lack of this refreshment at Brigham in those days, for there was the famous chantry well in the chantry field, now covered by spoil from the limestone quarries close by, and there was the baptismal well in the churchyard, beside the celebrated "Nun's Well" that moved Wordsworth to the making of his verse.

For Fox's and for Wordsworth's sake, one could wish no railway had ruined the original site of the latter well; but still hard by, there is a little channel in the grass

"Through which the waters creep, then disappear,
Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near."²

We may, after slaking our thirst, go back in memory to that day in 1655 when George Fox met the vicar of Brigham-cum-Mosser-cum-Lorton, who had so opposed him against his own conscience in the Lorton Vale; "who, as I passed by him," continues Fox, "said, 'Sir, will you preach to-day? if you will,' said he, 'I will

¹ *Journal of George Fox*, ed. by W. Armistead, 1851, Vol. I., p. 155, *seq.*

² *Nun's Well, Brigham*, p. 712.

not oppose you in word or thought.' I replied, 'Oppose if thou wilt; I have something to speak to the people. And,' said I, 'thou carried'st thyself foolishly the other day, and spoke against thy conscience and reason, inso-much that thy hearers cried out against thee.' So I left him, and went on; for he saw it was in vain to oppose, the people were so affected with the Lord's truth. When I came into the steeple-house yard, a professor came to me and asked if I would not go into the church, as he called it? And I, seeing no convenient place to stand to speak to the people from, went in, and stood up on a seat, after they were settled. The priest came in also, but did not go up to his pulpit. The Lord opened my mouth, and I declared His everlasting truth and word of life to the people; directing them to the Spirit of God *in* themselves, by which they might know God, and Christ, and the Scriptures, and come to have heavenly fellowship in the Spirit. I declared to them that everyone that cometh into the world was enlightened by Christ the life; by which light they might see their sins, and Christ, who was come to save them from their sins, and died for them. And, if they came to walk in this light, they might therein see Christ to be the author of their faith, and the finisher thereof; their Shepherd to feed them, their Priest to teach them, and their great Prophet to open divine mysteries unto them, and to be always present with them. I explained also unto them, in the openings of the Lord, the first covenant, showing to them the types and the substance of those figures, and so bringing them on to Christ, the new covenant. I also manifested unto

them, that there had been a night of apostasy since the apostles' days ; but that now the everlasting gospel was preached again, which brought life and immortality to light ; and the day of the Lord was come, and Christ was come to teach his people himself, by his light, grace, power, and spirit.

“A fine opportunity the Lord gave me to preach truth among the people that day for about three hours ; and all was quiet. Many hundreds were convinced, and some of them praised God, and said, ‘Now we know the first step to peace.’ The preacher also said privately to some of his hearers, that I had broken them, and overthrown them.”¹

It was not the last bout that Fox had with parson Wilkinson, for no sooner was he of “the leathern apron” out of prison at Carlisle, than, remembering the old adage that a shoemaker sticks to his last, he is again at Brigham, as his Journal shows us.

“After my release from Carlisle prison, I was moved to go to priest Wilkinson’s steeple-house again at Brigham : and being got in before him, when he came in, I was declaring the truth to the people, though they were but few ; for the most and best of his hearers were turned to Christ’s free teaching ; and we had a meeting of Friends hard by, where Thomas Stubbs was declaring the word of life amongst them. As soon as the priest came in he opposed me . . . so if any law was broken, he broke it. When his people would be haling (*sic*) me out, I manifested his fruits to be such as Christ spoke of when

¹ *Journal of George Fox*, Vol. I., p. 156.

he said, 'They shall hale you out of their synagogues,' and then he would be ashamed, and they would let me alone. There he stood till it was almost night, jangling and opposing me, and would not go to his dinner, for he thought to weary me out. But at last the Lord's power and truth came so over him, that he packed away with his people. When he was gone, I went to the meeting of Friends, who were turned to the Lord, and by His power established upon Christ, the rock and foundation of the true prophets and apostles.

"We had a general meeting there which was large and peaceable, and the glorious powerful presence of the everlasting God was with us."¹

If we have the good fortune to know the owner of the great house above the steep limestone quarry, we may, as we pass upon our way, have sight of one of those characteristic, unscholarly, and ill-spelt, but brave and devout letters Fox used to write to his good dame at Swarthmoor Hall, to keep her informed of the troubles that befell him, the stripes and imprisonments he had to bear for his witness to the truth as he knew it.

And now, as we mount westwards up the long slope from the Derwent Vale, with George Fox much in mind, another worthy will for the moment dispossess the memory of the Quaker. We shall pause by the little hamlet of Eggesfield with its Quaker meeting-house, and parish-hearse-house all in one, and we shall remember that Robert de Eggesfield, Chaplain to Philippa the Queen of Edward the Third, and founder of Queen's

¹ *Journal of George Fox*, Vol. I., p. 169.

College at Oxford "on his own ground,"¹ sprang from hence. But our minds are fuller of the Quaker stock that Fox planted here, than of any Plantagenet ecclesiastics, notwithstanding that the very name of the hamlet implies a church connection and rings with church history. Let us turn aside down the lane hard by, to the humble three-windowed cottage with its white-washed porch that faces up the road, and gaze reverently at it. For here on the 5th of September, 1766, in the same year that our old friend Jonathan Otley was born, there saw the light one of England's greatest chemists, John Dalton. I say greatest chemists, for Dalton's Atomic Theory reconstructed the whole science of chemistry. The little cradle still preserved at "Paddle" which rocked that babe, rocked one whose name and fame became world wide. Here the lad grew, and startled his father by constructing at the age of ten an almanac which is still extant. At the age of thirteen he became the village preceptor, opened a mixed school on his own account, and painted over the doorway of the little room which still stands at the end of a near barn—"Pens, Ink, and Paper, sold here."

From this school, which was afterwards moved to the Friends' meeting-house for convenience, he went, in 1781, at the age of fifteen, to Kendal, as assistant master to a relative; there, working hard at his mathematical studies under the guidance of blind Gough, the botanist, he remained, till in 1793 he was appointed teacher of

¹ *A Survey of Cumberland*, by Sir Daniel Le Fleming, in 1871, p. 1. Published by the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian Society.

physical science and mathematics in the New College at Manchester.

Dalton's success in after life was so much bound up with that appointment to New College, and the gaining of that appointment was so much Gough's doing, that it is worth while quoting a letter to a friend in Keswick, in which John Dalton describes the botanist:—"John Gough is the son of a worthy tradesman in this town (Kendal); unfortunately he lost his sight by the small-pox when he was about two years old, and may now be about thirty. He is, perhaps, one of the most astonishing instances that ever appeared, of what genius united with perseverance and energy and other subsidiary aid, can accomplish, when deprived of what we usually reckon the most valuable sense. He is a perfect master of the Latin, Greek, and French tongues, the former of which I knew nothing of when I first came here from my native place near Cockermouth, but under his tuition have since acquired a good knowledge of them. He understands well all the different branches of mathematics, and it is wonderful what difficult and abstruse problems he will solve in his own head. There is no branch of natural philosophy but what he is acquainted with. He knows by the touch, taste, and smell, almost every plant within twenty miles of this place. He can reason with astonishing perspicuity on the construction of the eye, the nature of light and colours, and of optic glasses. He is a good proficient in astronomy, chemistry, medicine, etc. He and I have long been very intimate, as our pursuits are in common, viz., mathematical and philosophical, we find it very agreeable

frequently to communicate our sentiments to each other and to converse on those topics.”¹ It was this Gough that Wordsworth must surely have had in mind when he wrote, “an eye practised like a blind man’s touch.”

Dalton’s earlier teacher and friend here, was a certain John Fletcher, Dominie of the Pardshaw Crag School, which seems to have sprung from the early educational efforts of the boy Dalton at this hamlet, and we can see in fancy the grave young Quaker schoolmaster and his delightfully studious pupil going off to visit the rain-gauges on the hills, puzzling over the arithmetical problems by the fireside, or perhaps making the Æolian harp, which so delighted the young lad’s keen sense of music, and encouraged him to become a student in musical sounds, to the confusion of a later Yearly Meeting. Æolian harpmaker at Eggesfield or not, we have preserved to us verses written to such an instrument by Dalton, and we know that in 1795 he and another Friend “drew up a petition to the Yearly Meeting soliciting permission to use music under certain limitations.”

John Fletcher and blind Gough, Dalton’s later mentor and friend, are not the only two we gratefully call to mind; here, in the humble handloom weaver’s cottage we think of the weaver’s colour-blind sons, Jonathan, as well as John; we can see Deborah Greenup, Dalton’s mother, busy with her new spinning wheel, just sent her from Caldbeck, and we can call to mind how years afterwards the humming of just such a wheel brought

¹ From *A Bag of Old Letters*—“Dr. John Dalton,” by Mrs. H. M. Wigham, pp. 79, 80; reprinted from *Friends’ Quarterly Examiner*.

back to young John Dalton's mind the pleasant evenings spent at Eggleston in times of old. We can hear the same Deborah rating her son John for sending her "sic a pair of red stockings" as would put any member of the Friends' society to shame, the fact being that John was colour-blind and knew it not, and had brought what he believed to be a very beautiful pair of silken hose of quiet drab, for his mother's wearing, from the hosier's shop in Kendal. "Thou hast brought me a pair of grand stockings, John; but what made thee fancy such a high colour? What! I could never go to meeting in town!" says the worthy dame. John assures her that the stockings in question are a nice drab; Jonathan, the brother, is called in—he is of the same opinion, the stockings are a nice drab colour. All Eggleston is summoned, and the village verdict is, "Varra fine stuff, but uncommon scarlet,"¹ and so their humble cottage became the birth-place of scientific observation on the phenomenon of colour-blindness.

Dalton, writing in 1794, says, "The flowers of most of the cranes'-bills which others call pink appear to me in the day almost exactly sky-blue; while others call them deep pink; but happening once to look at one in the night by candle light, I found it of a colour as different as possible from daylight; it seemed then near yellow, but with a tincture of red; whilst nobody else said it differed from the daylight appearance, my brother excepted, who seems to see as I do. . . . I was the other day at a Friend's house, who is a dyer . . .

¹ Cf. *A Bag of Old Letters*—"Dr. John Dalton," p. 85.

His wife brought me a piece of cloth . . . which I called reddish snuff-colour; they told me . . . it was one of the *finest grass-greens* they had seen. . . . I mean," he adds, "to communicate my observations to the world through the medium of some philosophical society. The young women tell me they will never suffer me 'to go on to the gallery' with a green coat, and I tell them I have no objection to their going on with me in a crimson (that is, a dark drab) gown."¹ John never went on to the gallery at all, never, that is, appeared "before meeting" to take upon himself the marriage vow. He confessed to his old friend Elihu Robinson that he had on one occasion fallen a victim to the charms of a young lady who descanted on the "use of dephlogisticated marine acid in bleaching and the effects of opium on the animal system," and so surrendered at discretion. "During my captivity," he said, "which lasted about a week, I lost my appetite and had other symptoms of bondage about me, but have now happily regained my freedom."² But the fact was, "his head was too full of chemical processes and electrical experiments to think much of marriage," and he used to aver that he never had had time to wed.

Dalton's fame was not blown far and wide till 1808, when he took the scientific world by storm by his *New System of Chemical Philosophy*; from that time to his death in 1844, honours were showered upon him. Eleven years before he died he saw himself stand in marble,

¹ *A Bag of Old Letters*—"Dr. John Dalton," pp. 85, 86.

² *Idem*, p. 87.

by the will of the citizens of Manchester, and by the skill of Chantrey, the Sculptor, at the entrance of the Royal Institution in Manchester. But better far is it than fame, to know that his heart ever kept its humility and its love for the place that gave him birth. Hither the old bachelor came each year to see the little house where he was born, to speak of the remembrances that each familiar bit of household furniture brought before his mind; to laugh as he would think of the cupboard where the crystallised carbon was kept, that used to go so red when it was burned in the candle, and under the more familiar name of sugar, was to him at once such a marvel, and such a temptation.

His near relations had died, but there was a thrifty couple who always made him welcome when he came down hither to Eggesfield, and to them, for kindness' sake, the old chemist left all his worldly goods, as recognition and reward.

A devouter worshipper at the shrine of the secrets of God in Nature we have not known in this century. He was, it is true, no courtier, as the following anecdote will show. When he was presented in 1835 to King William IV., the sovereign said, "'Ah! Mr. Dalton, how are you getting on at Manchester?' to which he replied, 'Well, I don't know: just middlin', I think.'" His Cumberland friends twitted him with his want of manners. "'Thou hardly showed court manners,' said they, 'in addressing the King in some common parlance.' 'Mebby sae,' replied the philosopher, 'but what can ye say to sic like fowk?'"¹ But if the pure-hearted, honest, homely soul

¹ *A Bag of Old Letters*—"Dr. John Dalton," p. 90.

knew little of courtly ways, yet did he ever stand in the courts of a Higher King, and we will, as we linger outside the lowly cottage by the Eggesfield lane, remember the concluding words of Professor Sedgwick's address at the meeting of the British Association at Cambridge in the year 1833.

"There was," he said, "sitting among them a philosopher whose hair was blanched by time, whose features had some of the lines of approaching old age, but possessing an intellect still in its healthiest vigour—a man whose whole life had been devoted to the cause of Truth; he meant his friend Dr. Dalton. Without any powerful apparatus for making philosophical experiments,—with an apparatus, indeed, many of them might almost think contemptible,—and with very limited external means for employing his great natural powers, he had gone straight forward in his distinguished course, and obtained for himself, in those branches of knowledge which he had cultivated, a name not perhaps equalled by any living philosopher in the world.

"From the hour of his birth, the God of Nature had laid His hand upon his head, and had ordained him for the ministration of high philosophy. But his natural talents, great as they were, and his almost intuitive skill in tracing the relations of material phenomena, would have been of comparatively little value to himself and to society, had there not been superadded to them a beautiful moral simplicity and singleness of heart which made him go on steadily in the way he saw before him, without turning to the right hand or to the left,

and taught him to do homage to no authority before that of Truth.”¹

We go forward now with a devout prayer that whoever owns that cottage will keep it in good order and add some simply inscribed stone above the door, giving the great chemist’s date of birth and death for the information of wayfarers. For Dalton is a name of which Cumberland must ever be proud.

So long as Cumbrians remember their world-famous chemist, and pilgrims come to see his birthplace, they will remember, also, a certain Elihu Robinson, a worthy Quaker, who dwelt here, and without whose aid, it is ten chances to one that Dalton would never have done what he did for science and the world. It was Elihu Robinson who helped the village lad in his studies, and encouraged him in his earliest endeavour.

Elihu Robinson’s house is still visible with its “orchard garden eminently fair,” wherein he, the earliest of Cumbrian meteorologists, used to measure rainfall, note the wind, and heat, and cold, and dewfall, and learn the time from his own well-constructed sun-dial, and make such observation as should guide himself, and his friends the farmers, as they guided their ploughs. Any time for half-a-century after his marriage in 1757 with Ruth Mark, we might have seen in Elihu Robinson’s kitchen the good wife at her wheel—“My dear Ruth spinning beside me as I write.” And about 1776 we should have seen his cousin, young John Dalton, here of an evening, puzzling away at his mathematical problem. “‘Yan med deu’t,’

¹ *A Bag of Old Letters*—“Dr. John Dalton,” pp. 91, 92.

the boy would cry, meaning one must do it ; then he would rise, and bidding Elihu 'good-neet,' would say, 'I can't deu't to-neet, but mebbe to-morn I will.'" ¹ Wilkinson, the Quaker poet of Yanwath, was a fast friend. Writing in October, 1785, Wilkinson gives us a picture of that happy fireside at Eggesfield. "'How dost thou spend thy evenings?' asks Wilkinson. 'I suppose thy Ruth sits next thee with her knitting, then Mally'"—his niece—" 'with hers, then the maid with her wheel, and William'"—the man-servant—" 'in the corner with his bee-hives, and now and then thou takes from thy desk some worthy author to enliven the after-supper occasion.'" ² There were times when very worthy living authors enlivened those homely evenings at Eggesfield. Under date "11th month, 13th, 1792," Robinson writes:—"This evening I had the satisfaction to afford a night's lodging to that worthy and indefatigable labourer in the cause of humanity, Thomas Clarkson, who both employed his time and attention for about seven years in the abolition of the slave trade. . . . He is a fine-looking person, of a manly presence, about 32 years of age. He entertained us about five hours with solid, clear, and often very satisfactory remarks relative to the abolition of slavery. . . . In discourse he doth not seem to give much attention to anything but what is connected with the main business of his life, viz., the abolition of slavery and the banishment of oppression and corruption from

¹ Cf. *A Bag of Old Letters*—"Elihu Robinson," by Mrs. H. M. Wigham, p. 7 ; reprinted from *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*.

² *Idem*, p. 6.

civil government. He appears to have a great regard for our Society, which may perhaps arise from our well-known and unanimous sentiments and unremitting endeavours for the freedom and relief of the abused Africans.”¹

It says much for Elihu’s well-known wisdom and weight, that Clarkson should have journeyed to this little out-of-the-way hamlet to unburden his soul to his sympathetic ears. It says much also for Elihu Robinson’s sagacity, that when, years after, John Dalton wrote him from Kendal asking for advice on the choice of a profession, Elihu, though he recommended him to stick to schoolmastering as being noble labour, said, “I doubt not but thy genius, unshaken perseverance, and steady application, may gain a competent knowledge in any profession, and I am far from thinking that of physic would be a misconstruction or misapplication of thy talents, parts, or genius.”² Robinson well knew that of the two professions John Dalton had proposed—Law and Physic—it would be only in the latter that the young man’s peculiar talents would find the opportunity they needed.

But the humour, the tender-heartedness, the affection and piety of Robinson come out most in his correspondence with the young estatesman, poet Wilkinson, who was indeed a man after Elihu’s own heart. “Winnow thy wheat, take it to market, put thy worldly affairs in order, and prepare to come and see us,”³ he writes to him. “I hope we shall have conversation, if not to

¹ *A Bag of Old Letters*—“Elihu Robinson,” pp. 8, 9.

² *Idem*—“Dr. John Dalton,” pp. 82, 83.

³ *Idem*—“Elihu Robinson,” p. 11.

much edification, yet tinged with innocence and brotherly kindness. If a little flash of wit or rather humour escapes us, it will be perfectly free from scandal or evil surmising. No person, friend or enemy, need be afraid that their character will be left in a worse condition than we found it. We shall pity evildoers and praise those that do well.”¹ That word pity reminds me of the distress of soul which this brother of pity, who was the almoner of many members of the Pardshaw meeting, often endured, on seeing distress around him which he had not means to alleviate. “The distresses and afflictions of my fellow-creatures often disturb my peace,” he once wrote. “I cannot relieve many, but I may pity them. And yet where I cannot fully relieve by pecuniary help, even to take note of their distress by a sympathetic look or expression may in some degree tend to lighten the burden of affliction.”²

Twenty years the senior, this Elihu was a constant friend and critic of the literary efforts of Thomas Wilkinson. This Wilkinson, the Yanwath poet, honoured by Wordsworth and beloved by Clarkson, writing in his journal an account of his ride on pony-back from Penrith to London to the yearly meeting of Friends in 1785, says, “At Kendal I met Elihu Robinson whose friendship is very dear to me, and we rode on together.” And it is clear from the correspondence that remains to us that they rode on together in fullest heart-friendship, and in intellectual accord, till in 1809, Elihu, on the pale horse

¹ *A Bag of Old Letters*—“Elihu Robinson, p. 11.”

² *Idem*, p. 12.

men call "Death," rode away and left him to weep in the little upper chamber here at Eggesfield, and to write his touching tribute to his friend's memory, "as he sat by the form of his beloved companion now cold and silent."

Eggesfield has had its men of earthly and of heavenly service, and may well be proud of their memories. Few men hereabout have lived lives of nobler simplicity and purer aim than John Dalton's friend the Quaker Robinson. If ever "an old age serene and bright" led men to their resting it was his, who could thus write in 1803, "As I am approaching second childhood I may now sometimes think, speak, and act as a child. But if in second childhood the simplicity and innocence of the child be conspicuous, it doth not appear a very degraded or melancholy situation."¹ Few have passed into the valley of the shadow with fuller trust than he, in whose diary the last entry but one runs as follows:—"Oh, sweet Jesus! thou merciful Mediator, thou art touched with a feeling of our infirmities! calm my unsettled mind! support me through this pilgrimage! oh be with me to the end! Amen."²

We leave the village with grateful hearts, and round now by the village pond, and so back to the road we go, away toward Pardsey Crag, the Mecca of Cumbrian quakerhood.

As we turn to Pardsey Crag we think of those rough days when the "Prophet of the Leathern Apron" and his followers, faced the storm of orthodoxy here in the North.

Readers of Chancellor Ferguson's admirable History of

¹ *A Bag of Old Letters*—"Elihu Robinson," pp. 13, 14.

² *Idem*, p. 16.

the Quaker Movement in Cumberland and Westmoreland, will know what short shrift the poor persecuted Friends received at the hands of Sir Gilfrid Lawson, Black Musgrave, Daniel Le Fleming and the like; what bitter treatment at the hands of Carlisle gaolers was theirs, and will understand the pathos of the situation and the simple bravery of Fox's character as seen in his account of his visit to Cumberland in 1663. I quote from his Journal.

"When I had visited Friends in those parts, and they were settled upon Christ, their Foundation, I passed through Northumberland, and came to old Thomas Bewley's, in Cumberland. Friends came about me and asked, 'Would I come there to go into prison?' For there was great persecution in that country at that time; yet I had a general meeting at Thomas Bewley's which was large and precious; and the Lord's power was over all.

"One Musgrave was at that time deputy-governor of Carlisle. Passing along the country, I came to a man's house that had been convinced, whose name was Fletcher, and he told me, 'If Musgrave knew I was there he would be sure to send me to prison, he was such a severe man!' But I staid not there, only calling on the way to see this man, and then I went to William Pearson's, near Wigton, where this meeting was, which was very large and precious. Some Friends were then prisoners at Carlisle, whom I visited by a letter, which Leonard Fell carried. From William Pearson's I visited Friends till I came to Pardshaw-crag, where we had a general meeting, which was large; all was quiet and peaceable, and the

glorious powerful presence of the everlasting God was with us.

“So eager were the magistrates about this time to stir up persecution in those parts, that some offered five shillings, and some a noble a day, to any that could apprehend the speakers amongst Quakers; but it being now the time of the quarter-sessions in that county, the men who were so hired were gone to the sessions to get their wages, so all our meetings were at that time quiet.

“From Pardshaw-crag we went into Westmoreland, calling on the way upon Hugh Tickell, near Keswick,¹ and upon Thomas Laythes, where friends came to visit us; and we had a fine opportunity to be refreshed together. We went that night to Francis Benson’s, in Westmoreland, near Justice Fleming’s house. This Justice Fleming was at that time in a great rage against Friends, and me in particular; insomuch that in the open sessions at Kendal just before, he had bid five pounds to any man that should take me, as Francis Benson told me. And it seems, as I went to this Friend’s house, I met one man coming from the sessions that had this five pounds offered him to take me, and he knew me; for as I passed by him, he said to his companion, ‘that is George Fox,’ yet he had not power to touch me; for the Lord’s power preserved me over them all. The justices being so eager to have me, and I being so often

¹ Hugh Tickell’s house was on the site of the present Derwent Cottage, at Portinscale. The Charity bequeathed to the parish of Crosthwaite still keeps his name alive, and a well by the side of the road preserves to us his wife’s name Dorothy.

near them, and yet they missing me, tormented them the more.”¹

Other outlying parts of the English Lakeland have their memories of Fox still fresh upon them. Swarthmoor Hall and the Ulverston and Kendal neighbourhoods are full of them. But except for that letter he wrote to David Fleming of Rydal Hall, “Friend, Thou hast imprisoned the servants of the Lord, without the breach of any law; therefore take heed what thou doest, for in the light of the Lord God thou art seen, lest the hand of the Lord be turned against thee!—G. F.”; with its, to Fox’s mind, consolatory footnote: “It was not long after this ere Fleming’s wife died, and left him thirteen or fourteen motherless children,”² we have not much to recount of Fox’s presence in direct association with the English Lakes.

Over the brow of yonder hill to the south lies Lorton Vale, and as all lovers of Wordsworth know:

“ There is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree!”³

Long after it had ceased supplying

“ weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland’s heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,”⁴

that tree listened to the preachers of Peace as better

¹ *Journal of George Fox*, Vol. II., p. 10.

² *Idem*, p. 22.

³ *Yew-Trees*, p. 186.

⁴ *Idem*.

than War. There, whilst Cromwell's soldiers who chanced to be quartered on that spot kept order, did George Fox and his friend James Lancaster speak "largely" on the occasion before mentioned, to a great multitude of people in the year 1653, and Fox, writing in his Journal an account of the sermon, tells us "This tree was so full of people that I feared they would break it down."

But our goal to-day is the "Crag of the Bardswood," the old Eisteddfod place perhaps, where in the Celtic times of yore, when their country was one great forest and had not yet been cleared of trees to supply fuel for the "blomaries"¹ and forges on the coast, the men met at their annual festival to give and take the prizes of their tribal song, or listen to the soul-stirring appeal of their seers, the bards.

The country round is desolate on this grey day, almost grim in its melancholy, but sometimes we have seen the sunlight strike the crags into whiteness, and laugh along the upland.

The Crag itself is at first sight disappointing. It is not till one climbs on to the breast and finds the limestone out-crop lying about in great semi-detached masses, like the limestone boulders of Bethel and Ai, that one feels the spell that is upon the place, the awe almost that breathes upward from the ground.

Then if one nears the natural pulpit, with its natural

¹ The smelting pits and forges for reducing the iron ore by use of charcoal and blast were so called. For the production of this charcoal the Cumberland seaboard was largely denuded of its woods and forests.

stone footstool for the preacher, one can understand the solemn hush that fell upon that congregation gathered on the slope below, who felt that God's glory was indeed with the man who was to address them, yea, that angels were really ascending and descending upon him and upon them, and that for them at least this was none other than "the gate of Heaven."

It certainly is at first sight an unlikely place for a preacher of righteousness. How could his voice carry to the listening multitudes? The Pnyx at Athens is at first sight not less disappointing,—how will the voice carry there? Closer inquiry proves that both Pnyx and "Bardswood" Crag are peculiarly adapted for their work. The voice of Pericles or of George Fox had, as it was lifted up, a background that beat back the words with splendid effect, far down the slope to the furthest listener in the crowd. Here to-day, as there at Athens years ago, by trial of the acoustic properties, can one vouch for the fact of the wondrous fitness of a rocky platform for voice of Pagan orator or Christian prophet.

It has been said that had 10,000 people gathered here to listen to Fox the Quaker, his words would have been carried to the 20,000 ears. And certain it is, that on that day, June 17, 1857, when Neale Dow, the American temperance reformer, addressed a vast concourse, a day memorable for the fact that more beer was sold round Pardsey Crag than had ever been drunk there since it was lifted from its semi-tropical sea, his words were heard by a congregation estimated at not less than 5000 people.

Here, as one stands in the silence and solemnity of this bare crag to-day, one calls to mind not only the enthusiastic manner of Fox the Quaker, but the anxious, half-convinced face of that great preacher of repute, John Wilkinson, the vicar of three steeple-houses, who came hither "latin' his flock," as Cumbrian shepherds would say, and of whom Fox tells us in his graphic manner, that "he would walk about the meeting on the first day like a man that went about the commons to look for sheep." But parson Wilkinson, all the while of his restless wandering up and down, was finding the peace which comes of conviction, and so touching is the account of his conversion to the Quaker views, that one dares, at risk of wearying one's readers, transcribe it from the Journal under date 1657.

"I passed," says Fox, "hence (Abbey-holm?) to a general meeting at Langlands in Cumberland, which was very large; for most of the people had so forsaken the priests, that the steeple-houses in some places stood empty. And John Wilkinson, a preacher I have often named before, who had three steeple-houses, had so few hearers left, that, giving over preaching in them, he first set up a meeting in his house, and preached there to them that were left. Afterwards he set up a silent meeting (like Friends) to which came a few; for most of his hearers were come to Friends. Thus he held on till he had not past half a dozen left; the rest still forsaking him, and coming away to Friends. At last, when he had so very few left, he would come to Pardsey-Crag (where Friends had a meeting of several hundreds of people, who were

all come to sit under the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching), and he would walk about the meeting on the First-days like a man that went about the commons to look for sheep. During this time, I came to Pardsey-Crag meeting, and he, with three or four of his followers that were yet left to him, came to the meeting that day, and were all thoroughly convinced. After the meeting, Wilkinson asked me two or three questions, which I answered to his satisfaction; from that time he came amongst Friends, became an able minister, preached the Gospel freely, and turned many to Christ's free teaching. And after he had continued many years in the free ministry of Jesus, he died in the year 1675."¹

We leave the "Crag of the wood of the bards," plunge down the slope and pass the Friends' meeting-house that at one time stood on the summit, but now nestles more securely at the foot of the hill, and make our way back to Brigham station. Yet we do not leave behind the impression made by that gloomy, desolate gathering-place for men in desperate earnest in the dark days of old. The blue encircling mountains, the melancholy plain, the worn and wild-looking prophet pleading from his rocky "rostrum," the sea of anxious upturned faces, all this comes back upon us, as turning from that Mecca of the Society of Friends, we set our best foot forward on our homeward journey, and feel right glad we undertook the pilgrimage that has linked the poet, the man of science, the friend of poverty, and the prophet, into one bond of golden memory.

¹*Journal of George Fox*, Vol. I., p. 313.

ERRATA

Page 4, line 23, for "hauled" read "haled."

Page 7, line 19, for "Hutchinson" read "Hitchener."

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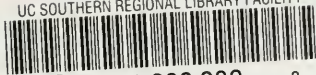


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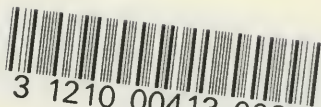
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